

spare Rib

In China
women don't play
cutesie-poo to
get their way

**Shirley
MacLaine**
interviewed

**Women
against the
dust** -page 24

**A Hard
Day's Play**
- adventure
playground workers

**Afraid to go
shopping** -Asian
women under attack

**Two letters
to a man**

**Where to have
your baby**
- What choice is left?



WHAT WOMEN NEED BUT COULDN'T GET TILL NOW

Whether you are single or engaged, married or divorced, legally separated, deserted or about to re-marry . . . whatever your situation 'WISP' will help.

What is 'WISP'?

Women's Individual Savings Plan.

A comprehensive insurance-savings plan, designed by women, solely for women, with only the interests of women in mind. Something which has never existed until now.

Before you change another typewriter ribbon, nappy or your mind, send or 'phone for the free 'WISP' booklet now. It answers all the questions you didn't know who or how to ask.

Send the coupon to:

Dorothy Genn

Langham Life Assurance Co Ltd

Langham House

Holmbrook Drive, Hendon NW4 2NX

Telephone: 01-203 5211

Please send me without obligation
a copy of your free WISP booklet

Name _____

Address _____

_____ SR6

Are you 17-30 ☐

31-45 ☐ over 45 ☐

Not applicable in Eire.

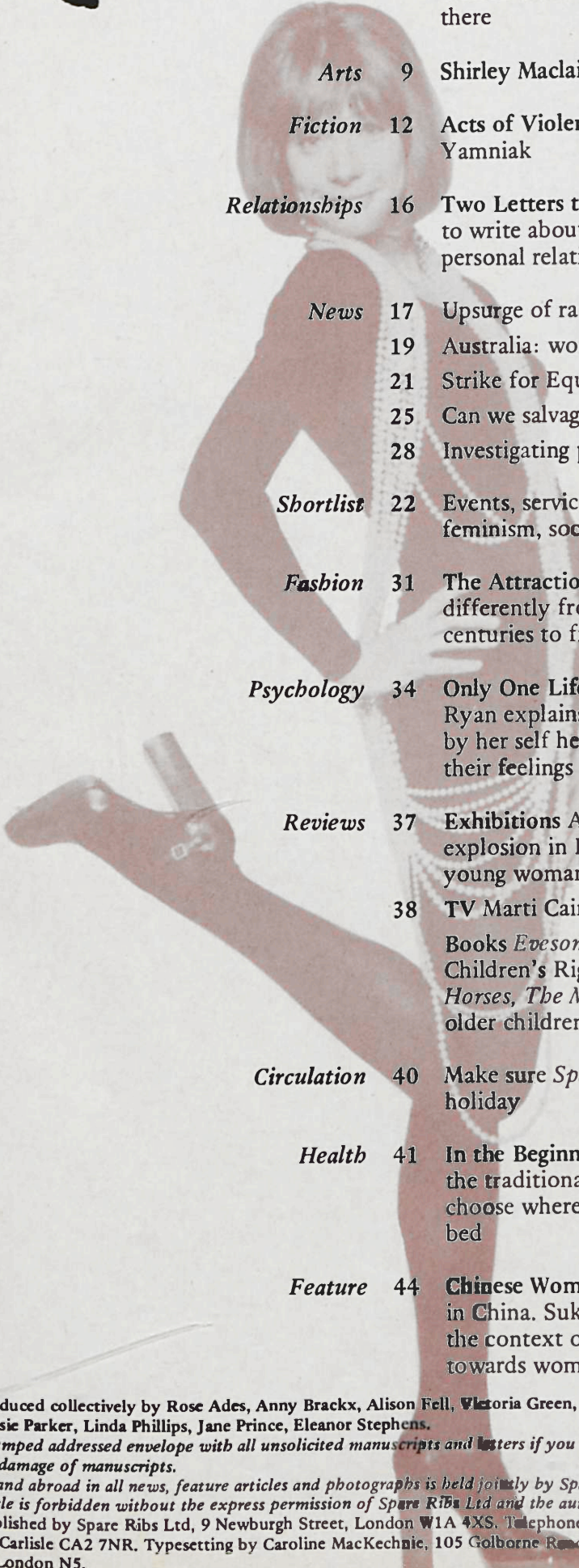


Women's Individual Savings Plan – it grows

Spare Rib

August 1976 Cover

Shirley Maclaine

- 
- | | | |
|----------------------|----|--|
| Letters | 4 | SS Inquisitions, Working Class Truths, and more |
| Children | 6 | It's Been a Hard Day's Play . . . Kate Truscott and Beryl Foster talk to workers in adventure playgrounds and one o'clock clubs about working — and playing — conditions there |
| Arts | 9 | Shirley Maclaine talks between shows to Eleanor Stephens |
| Fiction | 12 | Acts of Violence by Zoe Fairbairns. Illustrated by Sabine Yamniak |
| Relationships | 16 | Two Letters to a Man A reply to our request for people to write about their attempts to understand and change personal relationships |
| News | 17 | Upsurge of racism — how are Asian women affected? |
| | 19 | Australia: women charged for reporting rape |
| | 21 | Strike for Equal Pay at Trico's |
| | 25 | Can we salvage child benefits? |
| | 28 | Investigating private abortion agencies |
| Shortlist | 22 | Events, services, projects and new publications on feminism, socialism and countrywomen |
| Fashion | 31 | The Attraction of Opposites? Why do men still dress so differently from us? Lisa Tickner rummages through the centuries to find an answer |
| Psychology | 34 | Only One Life Continuing our series on help seeking, Jo Ryan explains what Gestalt Therapy is — a method used by her self help therapy group to express and understand their feelings |
| Reviews | 37 | Exhibitions Amanda Sebestyen reports on a women's art explosion in Italy; Feministo: Portrait of the artist as a young woman — a postal art event |
| | 38 | TV Marti Caine — a preview of her comedy series |
| | | Books <i>Evesong</i> — lesbian poems by Maureen Duffy; The Children's Rights Workshop enthuse about <i>All The King's Horses</i> , <i>The Man Whose Mother was a Pirate</i> and, for older children, <i>Mirabelle's Secret</i> |
| Circulation | 40 | Make sure <i>Spare Rib's</i> there when you get back from your holiday |
| Health | 41 | In the Beginning Christine Beels asks what's happening to the traditional female skill, midwifery, and our right to choose where we have a baby, in hospital or in our own bed |
| Feature | 44 | Chinese Women Second of a three part series on women in China. Suki Colegrave explains the present situation in the context of the Chinese Communist Party's policies towards women |

Spare Rib is produced collectively by Rose Ades, Anny Brackx, Alison Fell, Victoria Green, Sue Hobbs, Wisty Hoyland, Susan Lambert, Laura Margolis, Jill Nicholls, Rosie Parker, Linda Phillips, Jane Prince, Eleanor Stephens.

Please send a stamped addressed envelope with all unsolicited manuscripts and letters if you want an acknowledgement. Spare Rib cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of manuscripts.

Copyright here and abroad in all news, feature articles and photographs is held jointly by Spare Ribs Ltd and the author. Reproduction in whole or in part of any article is forbidden without the express permission of Spare Ribs Ltd and the author.

Spare Rib is published by Spare Ribs Ltd, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS. Telephone 01-437 2070. Printed by Carlisle Web Offset Ltd, Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle CA2 7NR. Typesetting by Caroline MacKechnie, 105 Golborne Road, London W10. Distributed by Moore Harness Ltd, 31

Corsica Street, London N5.
ISBN 0306 7971

* indicates letters have been cut

Dear Spare Rib,

I was very interested by your series of articles on help available to people who have "mental problems". You did not mention as a possible source of help Gentle Ghost, 33 Norland Road, London W11. Counselling/information 01-603 8739. They are an organisation set up to help people with all kinds of things, and charge them according to what they can pay. As well as removals, personal services, plumbing, etc., they offer counselling and psychotherapy in private or group sessions.

The people are informal and welcoming which is essential for anyone who feels they cannot cope with going backwards and forwards in the NHS machinery. When I needed help, I went to Gentle Ghost rather than wait for my NHS doctor to refer me to anyone. Anyway my GP did not know where or if I could get gestalt therapy on the NHS.

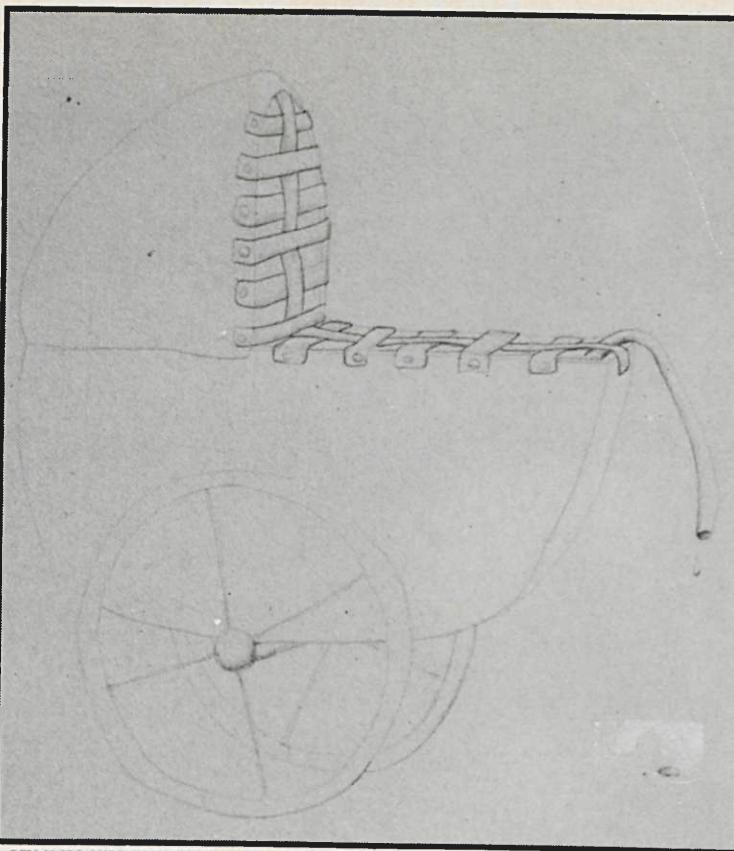
In *Spare Rib* 46 you mentioned women panicking at three or four o'clock in the morning. This happened a couple of times to me. Maybe my panics were comparatively mild but I found that I could cope by taking a tranquiliser or sleeping pill and then phoning the Samaritans. Talking to someone, crying eventually, and spilling out the problems made it easier for the tranquiliser to have an effect.

Believe me, phoning the Samaritans does help. Talking to any interested person, even if she/he is only a hesitant or sleepy voice at the end of the line, is better than talking to the wall or swallowing enormous doses of tranquilisers. In sisterhood,
A.
London

Ludicrous Benefit

*Dear Spare Rib,
With reference to Ms Keating's letter in *Spare Rib* 47 concerning Child Interim Benefit, I would like to point out that you do, in fact, have a choice in claiming it. Although the Inland Revenue assumes you will claim, and automatically gave all one-parent families a new tax code as from April 1976, you need only inform it that you are not claiming to have your tax re-adjusted. If you decide to claim, you must apply to your local DHSS, producing the child's birth certificate, for a parent's book.

The National Council for One Parent Families, 255 Kentish Town Road, NW5, have a pamphlet for 30p (incl. postage) which explains the procedure fully and also gives advice to help you decide



JENNY WHITTMAN

whether it is worth your while to claim. However, as you state in your article (*Spare Rib* 45) no-one benefits by the full amount, so the whole scheme does seem somewhat ludicrous.

More power to the Working Women's Charter with its demand for £5 for each and every child, and, of course, for more and better facilities for them.

Yours sincerely,
Brenda Robinson
London W12

The Inquisition

Dear *Women's Lib*,
As a single mother with a three-month-old baby, I am, like so many women in my position, forced to exist on Supplementary Benefit. On my first (post-natal) visit to the DHSS in this area I was interviewed in a private room as to the whereabouts of my child's father whom I am unable to trace.

The DHSS will in a case like this attempt to trace the father in order that a Maintenance Order can be drawn up against him.

However, after giving a physical description and details of his last known whereabouts to the Social Security I was told: a) I was taking the Pill at the time the child was conceived, b) If I was on the Pill before the time of conception and, c) If the father of my baby has

been taking contraceptive measures? What has one's form of contraception to do with tracing and contacting a missing person? When I asked what, if anything, this had to do with the

DHSS I was informed that it was necessary for the Social Security to have all the circumstantial facts in a case such as mine.

Pregnancy and childbirth, even in a happy marital situation, is an extremely traumatic and difficult time. In the case of the single mother the problems involved are stupendous, both practically and emotionally. I really believe that this type of interrogation by the Social Security could in certain cases have very serious consequences; say in the case of a girl who may be embarrassed or ashamed of her predicament, abandoned by her lover, disowned by her parents or homeless. All of which is unfortunately still taking place even in our so-called 'permissive' society.

The Law acknowledges that the balance of a woman's mind can be disturbed after the birth of her child — surely the DHSS should do the same? I believe the time has come for pressure to be placed on the Social Services Secretary and the Chairman of the Supplementary Benefits Commission to ensure that the single mother be spared this type of harrowing and totally unnecessary treatment by Government departments.

I look forward to your comments and hope you will bring my letter to the attention of your members.

Yours sincerely,
Gail Brackett
Suffolk

This letter was passed on to us by a local Women's Liberation Group.

Barred

*Dear Spare Rib,

On Tuesday May 18 I went into the Central Bar, Great Northern Road, Aberdeen and asked for a drink. The barman told me they didn't serve ladies. I pointed out that this was illegal under the Sex Discrimination Act but he still refused to serve me and denied it was because of my sex.

That evening another two women went in and asked for a drink. They were told by the barman that they didn't serve ladies. At this point another two women entered and were ignored. Then eight of us went in and the same reason was given for refusing us. The barman told us that he had no facilities for women.

We've written to the Equal Opportunities Commission and hope to see the matter through to the end.

Love,
Joyce Buchan
Aberdeen

Home Truths

Dear Spare Rib,

Someone left your magazine in our office last week. I work part-time as a copy typist in a solicitor's. Before I was due to go home I picked your magazine up. As I had never seen it before I was curious as to what it was about, because it seemed strange that a person had left it there almost deliberately.

I started reading it on my way home and what prompted me to write after reading it was a letter someone had written in expressing her views on getting back to grass roots. Her name was Agnes Thompson and it was in *Spare Rib* 47.

By god how she is right. I am a working class woman of 27. I have got three children and live in a corporation flat. My husband is out of work and has been unemployed for that long now that I don't think he even feels like having to work. He has become bone idle. Yet I am expected to do a part-time job, see to the children when I get home, cook a meal for five of us in the evening, do all the washing up and housework. When after all that I have finally managed to get the children to bed, my husband is out at the pub the evening and I am left to stay on my own (oh, we're not allowed social lives) feeling more isolated and bored than is possible. When my husband comes in he demands to have sex with me otherwise he starts smashing the flat up.

As Agnes Thompson says in her letter I have the constant headache of trying to make ends meet. I have not had a new coat for three years. The price of food is the worst prob-

lem, then if you have a husband like mine who drinks all his social security money away it is no help. I am not an only case of a woman in this situation. My friends and all the women you talk to, be they on a bus, or in the launderette, we women are really having to sacrifice our lives to our children and husbands. The other night my friend had no eggs in the house when her husband came home. Her husband was hungry after being at the pub. Because of this he smashed her house up and threw food around the kitchen — it looked as if it had been vandalised. Unfortunately for my husband I am getting sick of being used. I feel like liberating myself for a change.

Thank you for listening to me. I had no idea there were magazines like yours which were concerned with women's situations. I think you're doing a great job. It is about time we stopped going behind closed doors and started getting a few home truths out. Yours sincerely,
A Cooper
Manchester 15

New Women

Dear Spare Rib,
I attended the London Women's Liberation Conference on June 5 which was my first experience of the Movement as a whole. I have two criticisms to make. Firstly, there is a great disparity between members who have been involved in women's liberation for some time and those, like myself, who are new and learning. I found a lack of tolerance and understanding between the former and the latter that was most discouraging and is the sort of thing I feel certain puts women off joining the Movement.

On Saturday morning I attended a workshop entitled 'New Women' (presumably for women new to the Movement) and amongst this group was a Radical Lesbian Feminist who disrupted the workshop by telling us she did not want to discuss things that she had been through two years previously. She became angry enough to stalk out. The thing I can't understand is that if she has been in the Movement for five years, why did she attend a workshop for those who are new? Why couldn't she have been more helpful and constructive?

Secondly, and this is more a personal feeling, I felt a lack of friendliness. At the lunch break I befriended a woman who, like myself, was on her own. Then at the evening meal I sat quite obviously on my own and not one person spoke to me or asked me to join their group for discussion.

However, let me say that I

am not totally disheartened. I learned that day and will go on learning and hope to find some answers to my questions.

Hopefully, we are all in this together.

Yours,
Leila Harding
London N10

Hereditary Homosexuality?

Dear Spare Rib,
Kay Lacey writes (*Spare Rib* 47), "I am a lesbian . . . I cannot change the way I am." One hears and reads such statements more and more, from gays of both sexes. The point I want to make is that they implicitly support the 'hereditarian view' of homosexuality. According to this view, one's sexuality is innately determined; one is born gay (or heterosexual, or bisexual).

Over the past couple of decades, hereditarian explanations of social phenomena haven't been very popular and are usually branded 'right wing' when invoked. Think of the race and IQ debate. Jensen's 'racist' claim that blacks are innately 'less intelligent' than whites gave most white liberals a hernia and generated a storm of rebuttals. (Incidentally, I personally reject Jensen's claim, not because he's a poor scientist — his work conforms to the scientific standards in his field — but because I think that the mental testing paradigm itself stinks. Who gives a fuck about a person's IQ anyway?)

In a nutshell, gays often invoke an argument explaining gayness which, used to explain other kinds of social behaviour/experience, would be frowned upon by most people on the left. But for gays to use this type of explanation is probably a good tactical move at this stage in their struggle. Most 'tolerant' people, if they come to believe that one can't help being the way one is, feel that one shouldn't be persecuted for it (or at least, not too much).

But the danger is that any hereditarian view of human sexuality, whether implicit or explicit, must eventually restrict the emergence of full human sexuality. I feel bisexual; not because I was born that way but because I've fought hard alongside friends to overcome the conditioning which led us to believe that we could 'love' both sexes but only fuck with one of them (the 'opposite' sex). Society determines existence and not the other way round. This view is at the bottom of the possibility of 'raising one's consciousness', a possibility that no feminist and/or gay person would deny.

Finally, just in case anyone has any doubts, I support gay liberation 100%. To widen

the issue to 'full human sexuality' would undoubtedly not serve the cause — most straights find gayness hard enough to take, never mind bisexuality (or am I wrong here?). And probably many gay people themselves wouldn't agree that this is the wider issue involved. But it's something worth pondering in the meantime.

Love,
C M
Edinburgh

Childcare Put-Down

*Dear Spare Rib,
I am absolutely astounded that you could print that poster — "Kids are a full-time job? No, but they can stop you getting one." (Shortlist, *Spare Rib* 48). Don't any of you have children? They are a full-time job in case you didn't know. I am an ordinary mum and I enjoy reading your magazine but I am constantly disappointed by the pathetic shitty reformist line that you take.

The poster seems to be putting down the work of childcare as being less important than getting a paid job. OK, so we need to go out to work to get a "better" life and to feed our kids, etc. But I for one would rather leave my kids with friends than in a state-run nursery, however well-staffed or well-provided — because I don't want my kids in state 'control' — and I shall do everything I can to try and keep them away from schools. (I have friends with kids of the same age who think the same and we will start our own school.)

As for the Working Women's Charter — who have put their name to the poster — well, I can only think that they believe that being an employed person in this society is superior to staying at home and raising children. Of course we don't want to be tied to our kids all the time — we need time to ourselves to do other things and be ourselves if that's possible. But if child-

care carries on being so persistently demeaned as it is by the WWC and others, then it will always be seen as something inferior which is what this society wants it to be. Shoved aside, swept under the carpet, along with the mothers and women childcare workers. Yours in disgust,
Brenda Freeman
Bow
London E3

We think the emphasis on a woman's right to be able to go out to work if she prefers that to staying at home is very important. This choice is something to fight for at any time, let alone at a time when public spending on nurseries is being axed. But of course Women's Liberation ideas and agitation around childcare do not stop at the demand for state nurseries — the Dartmouth Park Children's Community Centre, opened by Camden Women's Group in 1972 can stand as an example of the sort of community-run, non-sexist and anti-authoritarian daycare ideas put forward by Women's Liberation.

While we're sure that the Working Women's Charter poster does not intend to demean the vital (and gruelling) work of childcare, we do feel that it oversimplifies what we want and must struggle for around childcare.

(By the way, there are mothers on the collective — four of us, as well as non-parents who are involved in childcare.)

Birthday Wishes

Dear Spare Rib,
Unfortunately it's impossible for me, because of time, to write the article you asked for. With my apologies, and my best wishes for the future, In sisterhood,

Simone de Beauvoir

Simone de Beauvoir



A Hard Day's Play

"Minding children" has always been considered women's work. All jobs associated with the care of children — playgroup and playground workers, one o'clock clubs, nursery nurses, baby-minders and nursery teachers — are low paid. Working conditions are poor and status is low; until recently these jobs have been regarded by trade unionists as outside their realm. On top of this, playing or organising play is looked down on, and people who do it are considered shiftless — just casual workers rather than workers with a 'proper' job.

However, much of this is changing. Within the last few years we have seen nursery nurses demonstrating, playgroup mothers and children picketing council meetings and blocking roads, and many play-workers joining unions and organising to improve their situation.

But the difficulties facing play-workers are still enormous. *Kate Truscott* and *Beryl Foster* went to Adventure Playgrounds and One o'Clock Clubs to find out what the job entails.



Conditions from the Dark Ages

Pretend for a minute that you'd just got a job in an office or a factory and they told you that there was no lunch break, no sick pay or holiday pay, and no toilets, that you are expected to work Saturdays and Sundays at the same rate of pay as week-days, that you would get no extra for working Bank Holidays, that there was no telephone on the premises in spite of a high accident rate, and for all that you'd get a basic rate of £32 a week with no written contract

of employment.

What would you do?

You would probably walk out on the spot thinking the boss was a mad tyrant from the Dark Ages.

Now look at an Adventure Playground. What do you think of? A space for kids? An exciting jungle of ropes and home-made slides and great hulking structures?

Think again. Adventure playgrounds are also workplaces for hundreds of people — workplaces whose conditions

are described above.

The first adventure playgrounds were set up in Notting Hill in the early 1960s. At first they were only summer projects and work was voluntary and unpaid. In two cases — Powis and Colville — private squares were taken over and "squatted" by local people for use as playgrounds. Then some play-workers decided to keep their playgrounds open during the winter and got permanent sites and huts. Soon adventure playgrounds began to be established in other areas, and play-workers began to get paid.

Now, most playgrounds are funded either by local councils, charities, or Urban Aid grants, or all three. There are more playgrounds in London than elsewhere, although most big cities have some too. They tend to be in the most built-up and working class areas where there are few parks and open spaces. The hours vary in different places but average 3pm till 8pm during term time and 10am till 8pm during holidays. Most playgrounds are open all day Saturday and Sunday, and Bank Holidays. The average wage for assistant playleaders is £32.40 for a 36-hour-week.

But recently, workers in playgrounds and one o'clock clubs in Hammersmith have begun organising themselves. On April 21st they lobbied a council meeting as one of the high points in their campaign to get more pay and the kind of work contract they want.

We asked Sue, a worker on a playground, how it all began.

"As assistant playleaders, we have only been in the union — NALGO, the National Association of Local Government Officers — for a year. Our playground is run by the local council, and we joined NALGO because we thought we would be stronger side by side with other council workers.

"Before January 1975, we were all casual labour. Just paid by the hour, even though we would be working maybe a 45-hour-week. At this time, the starting rate was 35p an hour, going up to 55p after three weeks. Then after January 1975, we were paid by the week at a rate of £28 per week. This went up to £32.40 in June, due to the threshold rise. But there were still no proper conditions of service. We managed to wrangle some things out of the council, like sick pay, but nothing written down.

"Because we had no contract, we started to get worried. There was a council report on playgrounds which had just been produced at this time, which showed that some of our conditions of employment were illegal. So the council knew they had to do something. We wanted to force their hand, so we have drawn up our own contract. We want to be on salary scale 3 of the white collar conditions of service, which would give us £48 per week for 36 hours work and the same conditions of service as other white collar workers. That includes holiday pay, paid bank holidays if not working, sickness benefit and incremental rises.

"Senior playleaders are already on this scale and we want the same thing. But the council have drawn up their own contract, and put us in a special category all on our own, so we can't compare with other workers. What they've offered us includes £32.40 for a 36 hour week — which is the same as what we're getting now — Saturday and Sunday as normal working, and no incremental rises. They even tried to impose this on us, completely ignoring any procedure which was all very threatening. I mean, who is going to work for £32 a week? £22 take-home?



We wouldn't get staff, the playgrounds would be undermanned and then the council would come along and say we were understaffed and start closing us down!

"So then, we really started organising. We pulled all the play-workers in the area together to talk about what we could do. And all the women from the one o'clock clubs came too, because they are paid the same and come under the same thing. And they feel it more acutely than us. They are only working part-time and take home much less money than us.

"We launched a publicity campaign and distributed leaflets to all other council workers because we wanted support from them and we're in the same union. Even the right-wingers in the union voted for us which amazed me. After all, we were asking for what amounted to a £16 rise. We also contacted the NUPE play-workers, and decided to work towards a lobby of the council meeting as a focus. The lobby itself was very successful. Lots of people came, particularly women with kids and lots of home-made banners.

"But now we are hanging on, waiting for a meeting of the Greater London Whitley Council at the end of June, which will decide whether to accept what we want or what the local authority proposes to give us. And if that doesn't work, we'll take it to arbitration. And if even that doesn't work, we'll have to be more militant, maybe even strike.

You're only women or students ...

"One of the most absolutely disgusting reasons the council gave for not wanting us to be on a proper salary scale was that they said that most playleaders are women and only work part-time for pin money, or else they're students. Which isn't true actually. And then they said that we didn't have any administration to do which is rubbish, you know. I

had to do all the administration work on this site for four months now. And most women are at the bottom. Very few get to be senior playleaders. Here there are three men and one woman which I think is wrong. There should be more women.

Linking up

"We're in contact with play-workers in other boroughs and many of them are even worse off than us. Some are still paid by the hour and can just be sacked at the end of the week. We'd like to set up something on a London basis and with both NALGO and NUPE."

The playground experience

How would you like to see things improved?

"I think there should be a hut on every playground, to do a variety of things and keep going in all weathers. We need a telephone in case of accidents. There are no toilets. Kids just piss anywhere and the place gets in a worse and worse state. Playgrounds need more space. They should be in parks and open spaces. This one is in a really stupid place for instance, boxed in by flats and offices. It's like a concrete dump and the kids can't be free. It's a little ghetto. There should be six workers so that we could have more time for the kids. And there should be an under-fives section away from the older children.

"And another thing, we don't have any say in who comes to work on our playgrounds. The council just plonks someone on us and we have to cope. I'd like to see the community responsible, and the playleaders coming from the vicinity, with the council just giving the money.

Male chauvinism

"I'd like to see more women on playgrounds, because you have no strength when you're just a woman by yourself. You're just fighting the ideas of the other male play-workers who are always trying to put you in your role and give you the little kids to look after and give you the first aid to do.

"I went for an interview with the council to become a senior playleader and I had a women's movement badge on. So from the moment he saw it, it was The Treatment, you know, real third degree. So the bloke says, Ah, I won't help you off with your jacket then. Really sarcastic and horrible. He said, What do you want to see on playgrounds? and I said, I'd like to see the girls more involved in building, because there's more and more girls coming on to playgrounds, and they're so male-orientated at present. And I want to break down the aggressive relationships. And he said, Discipline. What about discipline? How would you cope on a playground on your own? And I said, But I should never be on a playground by myself, because anyway it's against council policy. But he didn't know the first thing about playgrounds.

"I didn't get the job. I wasn't going to crawl to him.

The cuts and creating awareness

"The cuts are not really affecting us yet. There is one 'frozen' post in another park, and if there's any more, it will be really damaging.

"The main thing at the moment is that playgrounds are just used to keep kids off the streets. You can see this attitude in what Barrie Stead, leader of Hammersmith council said recently: 'Parks, open spaces and adventure playgrounds are essential to the health and happiness of the community, and help to reduce the pressures on our social services. Leisure time pursuits can fight vandalism and loneliness.'

"But my idea is that if it's a good playground, you can create more awareness in the kids of their own situation and give them a chance to develop themselves around their own needs. And you're much freer, you're not teachers, not social workers.

Girls

"If the girls come on to the playground, and the boys start messing them about and touching them, some of the male play-workers just tend to say, Look, why don't you just go home. They don't give them any support. It's disgusting. And often the girls come up to me and say, Do something, and then I get it too, and they start touching me too.

"I think we need girls' evenings. And also things like mixed carpentry and mixed cooking. Me and the girls did do some building here for a play area for the smaller kids. But we haven't got time to continue at present."

The One o'Clock Club experience

One o'clock clubs were originally set up by the GLC although most councils now run their own. They are all in parks or on housing estates. The majority of one o'clock club workers are mothers with small children. They are not directly responsible for the children who come — whose own mothers must stay with them — but for equipment and facilities. They work from 12 till 4, including laying out and clearing up. Their pay is now £3.60 per session (one afternoon). The GLC pay workers £4.05 per session. There is no sick or holiday pay, and no extra for Bank Holidays.

Although one o'clock club workers in Hammersmith have stood side by side with the assistant playleaders, the general experience is often quite different. Most women who run one o'clock clubs have young children themselves and many think themselves lucky to have any job at all where they can look after their own kids at the same time as playing with others. In a different area, several women said to us, "It's handy for mothers. If our money stays below £16 we don't get taxed and at least you've got that in your pocket." Another woman said, "I think we should get holiday pay and sickness, which we don't at the moment if we work less than 16 hours. This means for example, that we get less at Xmas when everyone else is getting a



bonus we get less money than the rest of the year." Someone else said, "I had to take an hour off in the afternoon to feed my one when she was three months old, and there's not many jobs where you could do that."

But then, shouldn't women demand that this kind of exception be made the rule — as part of a general fight for paid time off to care for sick children?

Jill has two children and has worked in a one o'clock club for several years:

"It's like a mothers' club really. Lots of friendly chat. I reckon that's more part of our job than looking after children. You get a lot of lonely mothers come to one o'clock clubs maybe tied to a house for the first time with a toddler. They need to get out and talk about their problems with the children, and see that they're happening to other people as well."

This is a whole helping aspect of many jobs done by women which goes completely unrecognised, in hospital work, nursing, teaching, for instance. Jill works in the one o'clock club because it suits her and she quite likes it. Yet she wouldn't really choose to work there:

"When my youngest goes to school, I'll leave." Clearly many women are forced to do jobs related to children and play, not necessarily because they want to, but because of the hours they need free to take and collect their own kids. And after a whole day of child-care, it's not surprising that women get frustrated about going home to spend the evening looking after their own children.

"It's important for men to do this job because men are part of kids too."

We agreed that more men and perhaps single people should take on jobs looking after and teaching children. And of course this relates to the whole fight to get women to recognise looking after kids as work, and hard work at that.

Jill: "No, I don't see it as work, not like a career. I see it as a filling job while my kids are small. But then maybe I'm lucky. I know I can do other things."

Many women don't see it as work because it is so like what they do at home — almost an extension of it — and *that* isn't considered work, when in fact it is. Bloody hard work. Millions of women have to do these filling-in jobs if they have small children. Just because we're filling-in, doesn't mean to say we shouldn't get a decent wage for it.

On a long established playground in West London, we talked to Bill, who went into play-work because he saw it as an important part of organising in the community.

"Play is often seen as just a fringe activity. But I think the time that kids spend *outside* school has a much bigger effect on them than what goes on inside. For a start they are much freer. They can *choose* what they want to do. And if they want to do it non-stop for the whole day, they can.

"Playgrounds are much more than building structures. You can do things like pottery, painting, car maintenance, photography. Building steel drums has been big around here and now there's a steel band. Then you get football, cricket, basketball, video, printing, outings and camping.

"But there's also a high turnover of staff which often makes the whole thing unstable. And the main reason for this is *pay and conditions*. And then the same people do tend to see it as a temporary job before going round the world or to college."

People leave because it's very exhausting. The hours are unsocial — working when others are off. There is a high rate of illness like glandular fever and just being run-down, particularly if there isn't enough staff.

"It used to be the case that most playground workers never had written contracts. There was no proper way to settle disputes. And maybe workers would be sacked because of a personal whim of someone on the management committee. But this is becoming less and less true. Now, people tend to *ask* for contracts, and take the union more seriously. And there is good contact with other playgrounds in this borough.

"What we are aiming for, I think, is full statutory financing by the borough, but local grass roots management by workers and parents and the kids themselves. □

Notes

Women working on adventure playgrounds meet every second Tuesday in the month at 10.30am at the Women's Liberation Workshop, 38 Earlham St, London WC2 (01-836 6081).

Apart from the interviews, the article contains the authors' own ideas on play-work. Some of the names have been changed for fear of reprisals from the authorities.



SHIRLEY MACLAINE

talks with Eleanor Stephens and
photographer, Michael Ann Mullen,
between shows at the
London Palladium

What's it like to do this show every night?

Oh, I really love it. I'm absolutely miserable when I have more than one day off.

You've been doing this for how long?

This show's been touring since February. I actually started working on stage in Las Vegas in July 1974 so I've been at it nearly two years. After this we're going back to Paris then Canada then back to the Palace in New York. I'll be there during the Convention so I can see what's happening.

Do you intend to get involved?

Definitely not. I just want to watch.

You were quoted as saying that if Reagan were nominated you'd drop everything and campaign against him.

That's right, I will. He still has a chance, you can't tell.

She leaps up to call someone. Suddenly the band blares out for the start of the late show. It's as though we're right on stage! She returns to the 90° dressing-room (so she won't get stiff) and makes a phone call to arrange for a car to pick up friends at midnight to go out to dinner. She apologises for the interruption.

I first tried to arrange an interview with you last October. You were here to show your film about China, and launch your book, *You Can Get There From Here*. I particularly remember you saying that being in China made you rethink for yourself what you were doing and led you back to singing and dancing.

That's right, it was important for me emotionally, and in terms of my work, to get back to doing something directly communicating with people.

In the film you raise several questions about individualism and the role of the artist, and how that fits into a socialist society like China. What was your impression?

It doesn't fit in at all. No, there's not that kind of individualism nor is there

the need for it in China. I had to completely re-orient my opinion of where individualism fits in in terms of priorities in a society with 800 million people living in a country the same size as mine that has 220 million in it. I think that what happened to me was that I saw a society working on a communal level which seemed to be working very well in many different ways.

Did you feel inspired yourself to work collectively?

No, it didn't work that way with me. What happened was that I hadn't been on the stage before I went to China — not since my late teens/early twenties as a dancer — not since I had become an individualistic personality knowing my screen identity. The experience of being on stage and bringing the people in the audience together is a supremely communal act. China made me move in that direction and made me want to try the stage. Whereas doing movies and television are private, individual acts between me and a piece of technology.

Do you really have a sense of the people in your audience? Isn't it just a black, blank sea out there when you're up on stage?

No, it's very personal. And the audiences change, you wouldn't believe. They're different every time and every single show is different. If you're not on your toes and in good mental, spiritual and philosophical health you can't do it.

You took a year out training for this, working in the gym and so forth.

Yes, but the real training came in finding out who I was on stage and that's still going on.

You mentioned how you were aware in China of not feeling lonely and alienated as you did in the West, even though you didn't know people or speak the language. Have those feelings come back working this way now?

Yes, those feelings come back strongly, I get quite lonely touring. Except that I write all the time every night until about seven in the morning, and sleep

until twelve. So I'm very busy. I'll be doing the show until December, taking six weeks off this summer to finish the novel. Then we go to Australia for a play, and then make *Amelia* in January. [A film about *Amelia Earheart, the flier.*]

I was surprised the show was so personal; it reveals a lot about you, your past, your opinions, etc. That must be quite scary.

Yes, it's terrifying to expose your identity, but that's what it's about, that's the show I wanted to do.

A man in Southport, a real elitist, intellectual, socialist horse's ass, and I say that as a socialist myself, he attacked me terribly for showing my legs, for being pretty on stage, for being what he called provocative. He thought I was being sexist. I'd never heard that before. I don't think my attitude is that at all. What I say about prostitution is that these are roles I've played, folks, and this is how I relate to that. The rest is kind of platonic, girl-next-door stuff. He also mentioned *Playboy* and *Playgirl* and he couldn't believe that I thought it was OK to have *Playboy* so long as we had *Playgirl* too, and women can enjoy men's bodies as they do ours. And it's a kind of leveller.

Surely we go further and question the exploitation of it all?

Yes, sure it's exploitative, no question of that. But the primary question to address is the fact that those magazines flourish in a capitalist society where the human body, and people themselves are exploited. So to criticise the pornography alone doesn't nearly reach the core of the problem. It's the total values that are destructive.

It's a common criticism of China by Westerners that there's no sexual freedom of expression — 'Chairman Mao bans masturbation' — did you feel that?

One of the women in our delegation was a cultural anthropologist, Phyllis Kronhausen, who has studied sexual attitudes in different societies. Her impression of China was that the level of sexual anxiety was lower than in any society she had seen.



Now there are many reasons for that which don't have a hell of a lot to do with their being Communists. Partly, they're working so hard that the sexual tension is less. They are all contributing to this ongoing revolution and the idea of going forward together — things that sound very rhetorically boring — and they are working collectively without a lot of energy or privacy left over to explore this. Nor do they have the sexually provocative stimuli that we have in the West, and they don't relate to each other in Romantic terms any more either. It's much more realistic.

It certainly isn't the kind of society that I would be able to fit into or even really understand, but from their frame of reference it would seem to be relatively happy and healthy, without the kinds of frustration, anxieties and obsessions we find here. And of course the sex roles are so completely different. They don't flirt and play cutesie-poo to get their way; sex isn't used manipulatively as it is in our society. Also when the Chinese talk of 'sexual liberation', to them that means the exploitation of women: that men had the freedom to do whatever they wanted sexually with women. So that's different again from here.

Couldn't you say that to a lesser extent the sexual liberation movement of the sixties was a male-defined and male-dominated movement?

No, I don't really think so. Women have changed enormously and upset the appiecart.

Are you very involved in the women's liberation movement?

I'm not involved in anything in an organising way but I'm certainly very involved in terms of my own beliefs and values. In my position I can make use of things like books, articles, TV, radio, to get it across to people.

There's a lot that women in the movement say that I don't agree with and I'm sure they don't agree with me. For example, while I think it's a very good thing for women to explore the feelings of the male as the enemy, I don't think it's a true fact. We have to work together to solve these problems. I think men also suffer from not having liberation. It's a horrible thing for both sexes.

Do you think a lot of men are questioning their roles as a result of the women's movement?

Oh, yes, you can see it in Hollywood, it's extraordinary. This question of women not having any good parts, which bugs us: we have to face the fact that the reason is that we, women like me, have intimidated the shit out of the Hollywood writer. I'm talking about intelligent, sensitive, radical men, who see themselves as being on the side of women's liberation. They are terrified that if they sit down to their typewriter to write a good woman's part, they'll screw up and their male chauvinism will be exposed.

Perhaps women should be sitting down to the typewriters?

Yes, but when women sit down they write complaints for three hundred pages, screaming and shrieking that we've been oppressed. Well, of course we have, we know that. OK. Now let's have ourselves a character who finds out what she wants to do and gets out there and does it, goddammit. No use wallowing in complaints. That's what *Amelia* is about.

Did you write the script?

No, it was written by the guy I live with, but he's been hanging around with me for so long, he understands this. So that's what's happening, the men are terrified. So they'd rather use Robert Redford or Steve McQueen. As I say in my show, they're getting all our parts.

It's been said that before censorship went out women had to have intelligent parts, but now that you can show sex on the screen that's all they give women to do.

Yes, I've said that, it's quite true. Now I don't at all object to sex scenes. But what absolutely infuriates me is that they can't conceive that a woman who has sex in the bedroom can also be Mayor of the town. Why can't women do both — men do! And I must admit I've not met many women writers who are any straighter on this than the men.

In certain ways we share the same conditioning.

That's it exactly. But we must keep trying. And it must be done in *dramatic* terms. You can't give the audience endless harangues, you must use effective dramatic ways of conveying this.

We face a similar problem on our magazine: how can we be hard-hitting and also light and humorous? It's so easy to be constantly depressing about



what's going on.

Yes, it's difficult. I gave a little speech at the Editor's Luncheon yesterday. I said that although a great deal of progress has been made in journalism here and in the US, we haven't gone far enough. We are now living in the Age of the Journalist. Two journalists brought down a whole government in the most powerful country in the world, so to speak, and a woman was the publisher. Mrs Graham kept out of the film, but she had the courage to allow these reporters to pursue this. But what struck me was that there were and are no *women* investigative journalists. Where does it say that the investigative instinct is a male quality? That makes me pissed off. I suggested in my speech



that we need more courage in the editorial departments and the publishing staff to put women journalists to cover subjects like Angola, Rhodesia, political corruption, nationalisation of aviation. Let women cover this and let men cover subjects like marriage and child rearing (isn't that important to a society?) or love and education. Let Malcolm Muggeridge be assigned a six part article on what to do about menopause!

How did they react?

They shrieked with laughter, and I got the point across by being funny. But it really hit home. It's very important because women ask different questions from men, and get different responses. On our all women China delegation it was noticeable that we didn't have any men to neutralise the clarity of the women's questions. We could ask questions like 'What do you do with your child when you're working?' or 'How do you feel away from your husband when you work in different places?' — these things are just as important as the sort of questions men ask about the gross national product.

How do you see things going in America in terms of women gaining more control — do you think that would have an effect?

A tremendous effect. I think we're too pre-occupied with sex roles, I really do. For instance the women should have organised and gone down and lobbied when Scoop Jackson had his investiga-

tion of the gas and oil companies. The women are the ones who inherit the energy crisis, and women are the ones who could organise to abolish what I call the 'permanent government': the people who own the corporate set-ups are the real government, it doesn't much matter who we elect to office. Of course I agree with the women's movement too but the whole society is getting ripped off. People are starving over there in America, it's hard to believe. A very good friend of mine who I couldn't get in touch with, died three weeks ago in California because she didn't have enough money to go into hospital and get diagnosed. We don't even have national health. So I'm not into too much 'Let's talk about our sex roles, folks'. Women should organise for *those* sort of changes.

Yes, but at this point in time most women don't feel that it is their role to take political power and organise, even joining a union; they still define themselves within the family.

Right, but if we were educated more and moved more to care about these things, people would do something. They'd struggle with their husbands to look after the kids so they could go to meetings, they'd have to make changes if they really cared. In turn many men would be happier with less frustrated mothers and wives. Once they got over the fear of losing their precious little sexual possession, that they knew you weren't out balling with somebody else.

That's what they're afraid of.

What caused you to become aware of these issues? There you were in Hollywood becoming a star — weren't you insulated from all this?

Travelling did it. I started travelling when I was nineteen — so I looked around me. My husband was a traveller with wanderlust and he opened my eyes to a lot of this. And I wanted to be independent from him, and we still have that kind of arrangement.

Does your daughter live with him?

No she lives alone, she's nineteen and she's been away from home since she was twelve; it's interesting how she has coped with evolving her own identity and who she is. On a lot of things she thinks I'm crazy and I respect that. She has to work out her own values. But for me travelling was a tremendous education.

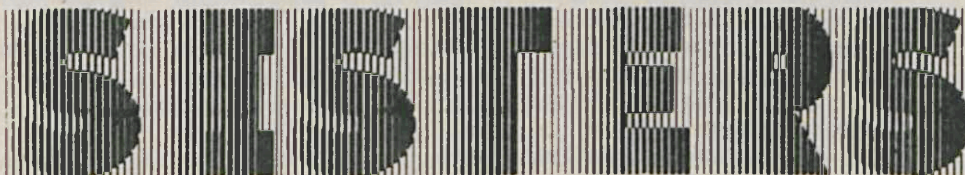
Don't the contradictions sometimes become very uncomfortable? When I saw you interviewed on the Parkinson show, I was aware almost of two distinct people. The movie star, confident and assured, flirting with Parkinson, being bitchy. Then instantly, the next moment, making very serious points about China or politics. How do you manage to juggle all that?

Yes. First you must remember I'm getting to be more and more of an expert on how to orchestrate my personality. In order to get across a serious point I have to tell a joke first.

You learn that after a while. You can't be Jane Fonda and make it work — or Vanessa. It's all too serious, people don't listen. Anyway I don't *feel* that way. I don't believe in no laughter until after the revolution. I believe in laughter during change and struggle; I believe in irony, and good, well-thought-out cynicism. I believe in doubt. Above all I believe in myself and other people and our potential. That's all part of a



kaleidoscopic personality. I suppose it's hard for people to keep it straight — Who is she? Is she a comedienne, a song and dance girl, a writer? Is she gonna stand for office? Well, I'm all of those things and I don't see any reason why I can't be. And I wouldn't be happy choosing, I wouldn't know *what* to choose. That's why I'm not really involved with the organisation of politics or the women's movement. I like to be on the outside of everything, I guess. But I think I can contribute too. □



If you are an engineering staff worker

JOIN TASS

The staff section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

If you oppose sex discrimination in jobs, in pay, in opportunity

JOIN TASS

Don't let the employers organise you out of equal pay and equal opportunities. Legislation will not be enough.

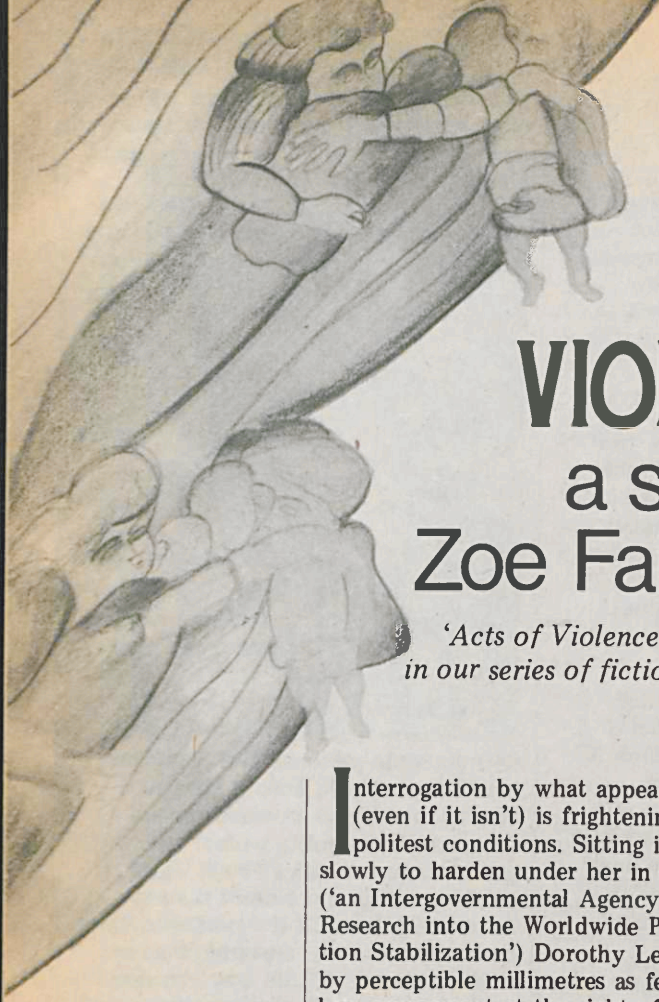
YOU NEED ORGANISATION NEGOTIATION

As well as legislation.

Write for application, or organise a meeting.

Contact: Judith Hunt, National Womens Officer, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, Technical Administrative and Supervisory Section, Onslow Hall, Little Green, Richmond, Surrey.





ACTS OF VIOLENCE

a story by
Zoe Fairbairns

'Acts of Violence' is the fourth story in our series of fiction from the women writers collective.

Interrogation by what appears to be the CIA (even if it isn't) is frightening even under the politest conditions. Sitting in a chair that seemed slowly to harden under her in the office of PopCon ('an Intergovernmental Agency for Fundamental Research into the Worldwide Problems of Population Stabilization') Dorothy Lenham's jaw dropped by perceptible millimetres as fear replaced incredulous amusement at the sight of the Senior Scientific Research Co-ordinator and the Press Liaison Officer, turning on her.

"Who are you?" they demanded.

"Who do you work for?"

"Who are your friends?"

"Where do you get these ideas?"

She remembered atrocity pictures in a political pamphlet; tiny Asians with frenzied eyes and great blisters on their mouths from electrical torture. She closed her drying lips.

She tried to swallow and sound calm, they thought her weak and silly and young, they'd never harass her like this otherwise. She said, "You know who I work for. You're always writing in to complain about my articles."

"Lies, propaganda and distortion," said the Press Liaison Officer.

"Do you publish your research?"

"Not to people who are going to use it for lies, propaganda and distortion."

"I'll be going then," she said, cheerfully.

"We don't want to be obstructive, Miss Lenham, we want to help the press all we can, and there's nothing secret in what we do here. But if we give you information, how do we know you won't distort it?"

Dorothy shrugged. "Please yourselves. But if you go on insisting that it isn't secret but you can't tell me about it — well, what am I supposed to think?" The two men exchanged glances. "I only wanted to look at your research reports," she coaxed.

The Press Liaison Officer took a heavy file from a shelf and handed it to her roughly; but her hands were strong, and she managed a gracious smile of thanks. "I'll be really interested," he said sourly, "really interested, to know what kind of propaganda that red magazine you work for can make out of prospective parents' attitudes to the impending birth."

"You've got to be kidding!" yelled Marie-Louise Lenham, as much astonished as afraid at the sight of

what he planned to use for the operation: a knitting needle. A knitting needle in this day and age! "It is . . . clean, isn't it?" she said.

"There's nothing to worry about, Mrs L," he said. "I know my work." And twenty five years rolled away, and it was a different room, yet still the same: old white paint, grudgingly clean; the nasty sticky rubber mat under her bottom, making her wonder about all the other bottoms that had lain on it, wonder desperately to take her mind off the panic at the instrument's entry into her, and the thought, *it's like the first screw you ever had, why do we do it, why do we go on doing it?*

"No," she said. "No." She felt the cold steel hesitate.

"I haven't hurt you?"

"I don't want it."

"Now, Mrs L, you know you couldn't cope with a baby at your age."

"You'll murder me with that thing."

"You'll have to let me finish, now I've started."

"Get — out!" Her body heaved, and his hurtled across the room under the unexpected blow from her foot. She fled home on the tube, scolding herself for her cowardice and crooning softly to her baby, relieved that it was still there. People sitting next to her got up and left. She looked along the row of advertisements. Bad breath, jobs for temps, are you pregnant? What a coincidence! They helped you if you were pregnant. Well, she was going to need a lot of help, that was for sure, and if someone took the trouble to put an advert in the tube, the least you could do was memorise the number and see what they could do for you. The things she was going to need for the baby! She started to make a list in her head.

Dorothy, Marie-Louise's daughter, looked around the long narrow room that was their home, and groaned. So it had been a collections day today. Mother had been collecting things. Eighteen milk-bottles on the mantelpiece, some with milky smears and doubtless smelling cheesy. Rusty tins under the bed and a few more in the sink. And, in a carrier bag, cunningly at the back of a wardrobe, a bumper harvest of old kleenex.

"Oh mother —" she heard tears in her voice.

"It's all right, dear. I'm going to wash everything, and keep it or sell it."

"Keep baked bean tins? Sell dirty hankies?"

Dorothy fought with her wicked anger. Mother couldn't help it. Things could be worse.

"The other way round, dear. Tins can be recycled. Perhaps the hankies weren't such a good idea. Not very hygienic for —"

Closing her mind to her mother was a survival skill Dorothy had learned many years ago, when she realised that if she didn't look after her, no one else was going to. Then it became the only way to work: shut mother out, shut out her demands and her outrages, concentrate, work. It might seem brutal sometimes, but there was no point in having two people mad.

"... don't you think so, dear?"

"Mother, I'm not talking now, I'm working."

"Dorothy, how would you feel if I —"

"Mother, I can't support us if I can't work."

Marie-Louise fell silent. Dorothy was relieved. Something had apparently been decided, for Marie-Louise's continuous muttering had stopped, and she went silently about the business of washing the tins. At least she only robbed bins and doorsteps, she didn't shoplift. If she screwed around, at least she was discreet. At least she was continent and clean and usually OK to go out by herself. And she wasn't violent. She wasn't really like a mad person at all.

A few days later, one of the cheaper newspapers

headed a story: "SCIENCE CONFIRMS: TOO MANY WOMEN!"

The text said, "Science confirms what many a mere male has long suspected — that the troubles of the world are women's fault, and if there were fewer of them, things would get on a whole lot better."

"Writing in the science magazine *Changes*, Miss Dorothy Lenham claims that the overwhelming majority of parents all over the world have been shown, by researchers at PopCon, to prefer sons rather than daughters. More than half would accept an abortion if the foetus were found to be of the wrong sex, particularly if some kind of financial inducement were available."

"According to Dorothy, a leading women's libber, PopCon intend to follow up this discovery by making funds available for the development of safe ways of detecting the sex of a foetus, and by campaigning for the liberalization of abortion laws in countries where they are restrictive."

"Dorothy told our reporter last night, 'PopCon has often been regarded as an ally of women in its championship of abortion on demand. But a whole new light is cast on their activities if they intend to encourage mothers to abort girls as a population control measure.'"

"Did Dorothy not accept that cutting down on women, and thus on man's reproductive capacity, could solve the population problem within two generations? 'Maybe, but what kind of world would it be? It's a classic illustration of how women are used as scapegoats. Women aren't just breeding machines, to be phased out when no more breeding is required,' she added."

"Cartoon, Page 7."

"What a nice place," said Marie-Louise.

"Glad you like it," said the social worker. "You want an abortion, do you?"

"Well, yes, I think so, I thought I could cope at first, and to tell you the truth I've had enough knitting needles in my guts to last a lifetime already. But Dorothy's in a world of her own, so I saw your number on the underground and thought I might as well come."

"Would you like to try and tell me why you want an abortion?"

Marie-Louise looked blankly at her — she thought she'd just said. Perhaps she hadn't gone into enough detail. Perhaps it was something to do with the law. They were always changing the law about who could and who couldn't, and that was why she'd gone to the man with the knitting needle in the first place, at least you knew where you were with him. Still, this place was decidedly cleaner.

"Why don't you want the baby?"

Marie-Louise started to tell her. Afterwards she couldn't remember half of what she'd said. If she'd meant to lie, she'd have planned the lies; as it was, it was more like someone else speaking, someone for whom all the tales might be true: the tales of the amorous husband who would not be denied, or even delayed; of her horrified discovery that her tried and trusted dutch cap had let her down after all these years, of her disappointment that she would not now be able to train as a doctor or write a book or run a campaign to get more zebra crossings or offer a home to her poor ailing mother; and then of course there were the medical difficulties, what with her diabetes and the early mongol child that died and all the caesarians; and the home where there wasn't an inch of space and how the baby might be coloured; and the over-riding, gut-rending terror that the baby might have royal blood (of course if ever this got outside these walls there would be no answering for the political consequences for the western world) and in the circum-

stances it seemed kind that the child were never born. "I'm not a woman to bear a grudge," she said, "Will I be allowed to have it taken away?"

"It's not a question of *allowed*," said the social worker. "It's a question of what you want."

"Oh well," said Marie-Louise, "I will then."

"Will what? Have the baby?"

"Yes, I'll have the baby. I mean, no, I'll have it taken away. How funny, to have to choose, it's really that simple?"

"Of course it is," said the social worker. "Women can make decisions about their own bodies I should hope." And she got down a big appointment book from a shelf.

Dorothy woke, tense and listening. There was someone in the corridor. Knuckles rapped at the door.

"Ssh, ssh, please, don't wake my mother —"

"Dorothy. We have to talk to you."

"Who is it?"

"You don't know us."

Dorothy scuttled across the room to shut them up, whoever they were; her mother had only just got off to sleep and given her some peace. She opened the door and stepped out into the corridor, her coat over her bedclothes. She faced two women, one short and tough-looking with her hair cut into the short back and sides long abandoned by men (must be gay, Dorothy thought, guiltily) and the other pale, blonde, anaemic-looking with watery eyes.

"We read your article," said the anaemic one.

"Who are you, though?"

"I'm Lula, this is Claire."

"I can't ask you in. My mother —"

"We have to talk somewhere," said Claire, the one with the man's hair-cut, who was rather frightening.

They went down the greasy stairs and into the street. Three pairs of footsteps clattered on the pavement, out of step, like three clocks. Lula and Claire were talking to her, a sort of duet: Lula was persuasive and chatty, Claire chimed in with sharp ideological comments or scornful snorts; hard cop, soft cop.

"I don't know," said Dorothy softly, when they wanted an answer from her. "I don't know."

"How can you *not know*?"

"We understand the difficulty," Lula said gently, "but we — Claire, and I, and a lot of other women — have been wondering how much longer you were going to make your living writing articles in support of women before you felt you had a duty to take some action."

The charge went straight home. And yet . . . "I support my mother. What if I got my arms blown off, I need them for my work!" It was the first thing that came into her head. "Who are you, anyway?"

"We're a group of women who are tired of talk."

"What would it achieve? Why me?"

"Why you, because you know the building and could get into it. A follow-up story or something. As for what it would achieve . . ." Claire abandoned the explanation, Lula took her cue.

"It's symbolic. Every woman who read about what that place is for, will understand. It's an act of solidarity with every woman who's under pressure to have a baby, or not have a baby — or under pressure to have a boy or have a girl, or who knows, for god's sake, have a puppy or a kitten or a goddamned foal."

"I know." Dorothy bit her nails miserably. "I know. But what are we saying? All those bastards are doing is giving people the right to choose the sex of their baby. How can we oppose that?"

"You talk as if it was an interesting academic problem," Claire snarled. "Don't you realise they

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SABINE YAMNIAK





want to *wipe us out*? Can we really do nothing about it just because we can't think of the perfectly right thing to do? I don't know why you wrote the thing in the first place — it was a nice scoop for you, I suppose. Pay you well, did they?"

"I have to live," said Dorothy.

"So we all do, sister."

"What would I have to do . . . if I agreed?"

"Just go in there and leave a package."

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

"OK."

Marie-Louise was having a nightmare. She was eating a dish of jelly, but as she tried to get her spoon in, the jelly got tougher till it was impossible to eat. There were little bits of things in the jelly, fruit maybe, but as she got closer they weren't fruit at all, they were babies, tiny babies caught in the jelly, trying to swim. She woke up.

"Dorothy, Dorothy —"

"Ssh, mother, don't make that noise —"

"Why aren't you in bed? Why are you sitting over there?"

"I'm thinking. Go back to sleep."

"Dorothy, you can't just kill someone, just because it's easier."

"What —?" Dorothy went to her mother, cradling her. "There's something, isn't there?"

"I won't inflict these things on my daughter."

"Mum, I want to know."

"Then mind your own damn business!" She pushed Dorothy away, nearly making her fall. "I'm going out to get some air. There's no damn air in this place you make me live in, Dorothy."

She went out and wandered a bit, looking at baby-clothes in shop windows till the sun went up. The world had a lot to offer babies, it would be mean not to have this one. She'd phone up that place and cancel. Unfortunately she couldn't remember the number, but she'd go on the underground again and find it. It took all morning, but finally she found an advertisement offering free help to pregnant women, and wrote down the number.

"Hello, this is Mrs Lenham. I've phoned up to cancel. I had a dream and changed my mind and it wasn't true about —"

"Hello?"

"I said, look, the father isn't really prince of —"

"Hello, can we help you?"

"Look, are you the people who help when people are pregnant?"

"We are, yes."

"Well, this is Mrs Lenham, and I don't want it taken away after all."

"Well, that's wonderful, you've decided to act positively."

Something in the woman's voice made her hesitate. "More or less . . ."

"Mrs Lenham, would you like to come and see us? I'll give you the address."

"I've got the address, I've been there."

"Been here?"

"When you said I could have it taken away."

There was a pause. The woman's voice changed.

"Yes, yes, well, this is, er, a different address."

Different address? "Hey, wait a minute — Wait a minute! I remember now! You're a different advertisement! You're not the people I went to before — who are you, anyway?"

"We try to help women," said the now-very-prissy voice, "to reach a positive solution to the problems of unplanned pregnancy."

"You mean you want to stop me having my abortion."

"We're concerned with your baby's right to live."

"It's not a baby, it's a lump of jelly."

"It has arms and legs. It feels pain. If you cut him up and pull him out of your body — which is what they do —"

"Oh you liar, you liar, you're lying you liar!" She banged down the phone. How dare anyone tell her what to do? She'd choose. She'd decide. It was her body, it was her life.

The fire at the PopCon building didn't make much news. One office was burned out completely, and with it several weeks' research findings. Seven fire engines came, but the firm which had fire-proofed the building got high praise for the containment of the blaze. It was clearly arson — not the IRA, as everyone assumed at first, but women's lib. The papers were reproachful. The body of the only casualty was identified as Dorothy Lenham, who had written some rather hysterical articles about PopCon and clearly believed her own propaganda. The editorials warned that women's libbers, many of whose more moderate demands were valid, risked the loss of popular support if they resorted to senseless acts of terrorism.

Dorothy Two was a fabulous baby when she arrived. It was an easy birth and Marie-Louise had everything organised for taking her home. She got a job cleaning a nearby factory, and slipped home during tea-breaks to make sure Dorothy Two was all right. Dorothy Two was more than all right — she grew fat and smiling and cheerful.

Then one day a lady came from the clinic to see Dorothy Two. She was fat and plain, with a blue overall and moles all over her face and no wedding ring.

"Hello, Mrs Lenham. We're a bit concerned about Dorothy, we haven't seen her for such a long time."

"She's all right."

"May I —?"

"She's asleep!"

Dorothy Two wailed treacherously. "There, she's awake now!" The clinic woman strode in and hoisted Dorothy Two aloft, looking at her distastefully. Marie-Louise gasped at the way the child suddenly became thin and feverish-looking under the woman's gaze. There were great red marks on the tiny thighs. "Urine burns," pronounced the lady, and soon Dorothy Two was taken off into care. Marie-Louise watched, aghast but unresisting as they took the little frail baby away; she sat by the window, perfectly still, till night came. And when the moon went up, she started to moan softly, thinking, I'm like an animal, I'm baying at the moon like a bereaved wolf.

She phoned a lot of numbers in the weeks that followed. London was suddenly full of numbers you could phone if you wanted help: if you wanted an abortion and if you didn't, if you wanted to commit suicide but didn't really, if you were going bald, wanted a job, had been arrested or wanted a recipe. Marie-Louise tried them all, but they were all the same, they all said, "Make an appointment." She didn't want an appointment, she wanted her baby.

They were all the same, these people who tried to help. They couldn't help because they were only in it for themselves. There was only one person who'd ever really helped, and that was Dorothy. But Dorothy was dead now, and that was why Dorothy Two was in care, because she couldn't look after her without help. Still, you couldn't blame Dorothy One, it wasn't her fault she was in that building (which must have been important, they repaired it so fast!) when it caught fire; and Marie-Louise knew that Dorothy would have helped her keep her baby if only she'd lived. □

WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VIBRATORS

As the first company to introduce vibrators into the U.K. and having sold some hundred of thousands, we feel that we know more about them and their use than most.

The most important thing to remember is. **that they do work** — providing the woman has no violent prejudice against the use of artificial sexual stimulation. Some women find the shape off-putting. The phallic symbolism, deliberately created by the makers to emphasize its sexual usage, gives them the impression that it is meant to be used as an artificial penis, and indeed it can and is so used. Some women, however, find the effect — when used in this way — to be more numbing than stimulating.

The vibrator is designed and is far more effective when used for clitoral stimulation and its undoubted value for this purpose has been well established by Masters and Johnson in their book "An Analysis of Human Sexual Response." In the book they describe how, using a similar device, they were able to bring to orgasm women who have never before reached a climax.

These were extreme cases obviously. Normally, the vibrator is used to provide extra stimulation during love making and is particularly useful where the woman's response tends to be slow. And, of course, it is just as often used purely for personal pleasure.

Finally a word about quality. There are many different makes on the market today, all of similar design, ranging in quality from very good to absolutely useless. We have been selling the same model for seven years and have enough confidence in it to offer you our special 'money refund' service if you are not satisfied.

If you want to experiment with your own personal vibrator, just complete the coupon below.

Please send me a Harmony Personal Vibrator.
I enclose Cheque/P.O./Cash for £4.50 (including postage and packing)

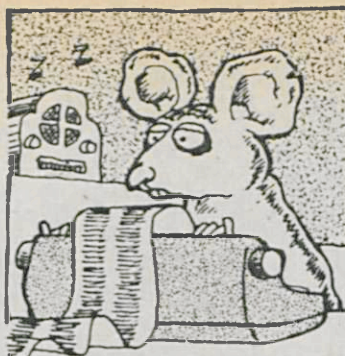
Name:

Address:

.....

Please
PRINT
Clearly

Pellen Personal Products Ltd.,
Dept SR
1a West Green Road, London, N.15



IBM Typesetting by
Caroline MacKechnie/Shirley Divers
105 Golborne Road, London W10
Telephone 01-969 5083
Good rates for feminist/alternative
books, mags, pamphlets, etc.
Illustration and paste-up too.

Look
beautiful
this
Summer in
our Indian
cotton
wrap-over
skirt in soft
shades of / pink /
blue / or green



FITS MOST SIZES
SEND £3.95 (plus 35p p&p)
KON-TIKI (Dept. A), 117 NELSON ROAD,
WHITTON, TWICKENHAM, MDDX.

♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀

SUPER SERVICES

Astrology : Gardening : Typing

Electrical Repairs & Rewiring

Hair Cutting : Removals

Cushions Covered : Upholstery

Interior Decorating : Typesetting

: etc :

By Women for Women

01-229 0145

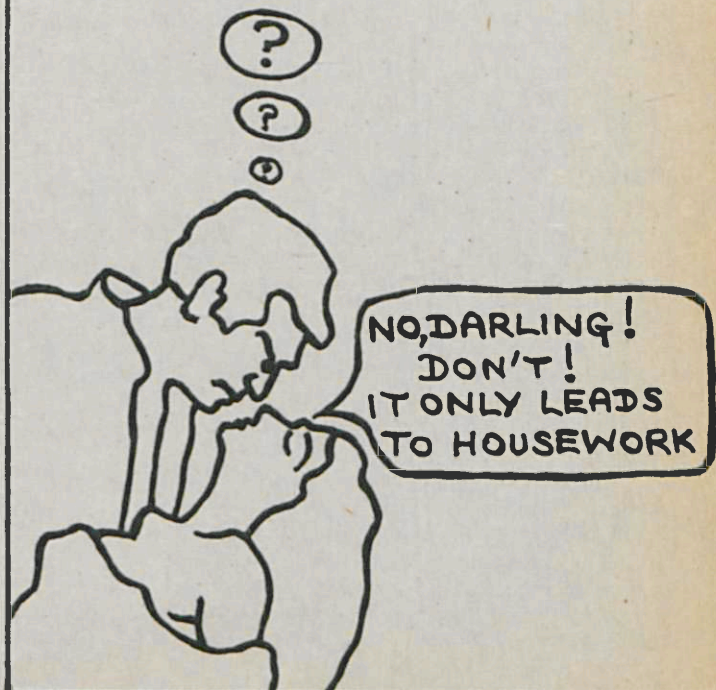
80 Lancaster Road London W11

♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀

COMMUNITY

A GROWTH CENTRE FOR
EVERYONE to explore, expand,
self-realize and perhaps to change.
GESTALT, BIO-ENERGETICS,
MASSAGE, PSYCHODRAMA,
TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS,
MEDITATION, ENCOUNTER,
CO-COUNSELLING, TAI-CHI-
CHU'AN, AND MORE. We offer
weekend workshops, lectures, on-
going groups, introductory days,
advanced training and intensive
courses. DROP-IN INTRODUCTORY
GROUP every TUESDAY
and FRIDAY 7.30pm, no need to
book. MALE-FEMALE CON-
SCIOUSNESS on-going group.
Wednesdays, led by Bob Jones and
Alix Berlin. WOMEN ALIVE —
Mondays on-going group. Bio-
energetic movement and focus on
issues of being a woman in the
world today. All at
COMMUNITY
15 Highbury Grange
LONDON N.5. 01-359 1372.

Framed mirrors — 9 ins x 12 ins — printed
as illustrated. Available from Graphic
Workshop, 232, Mare St. London E.8.
£2.55 each plus 65p for P.P.(or collect)



Two letters to a man

Dear Spare Rib,

I'm sending you a double letter I wrote (but never sent) to a man with whom I had a bitter argument at a conference in York this year. The sparking off point was women, children and creches — a situation which repeatedly causes hassles between both men and women, and women and women.

I wrote the double letter because I found myself completely emotionally blocked for weeks after the scene happened. I realised I was having a strange double reaction to the whole thing so I wrote a two-sided letter. It worked; now I feel much happier about the whole thing.

The letter on the right of the page was written after the letter on the left, but neither is the statement of what I feel, and both letters bring out aspects of myself that I don't much like. They express for me the eternal confusion I experience in reacting to men. Love, Shirley Lewis

Dear Tom,

For six weeks now I have been struggling with the aftermath of the anger I felt when I met you.

I am angry with you because you spoke down to a child, you told him to get out because he was giving you the shits. He was the only child in the room (and he just happened to be my child). You spoke to him in a way you wouldn't have dared speak, at that stage, to any equal stranger in that room. I would have been just as angry with a woman for doing it. We had been talking, all of us, about patriarchy. Gail had said, the men's movement is a waste of time. I had said, the women's movement is no longer relevant. You had said, patriarchy no longer exists — there is only hierarchy.

We had all smiled, purred, pleased to agree together. Libertarian, liberated, peace-loving, freedom-loving to a man and woman.

It was too comfortable wasn't it?

YOU had to bring prejudice and aggression and intolerance and selfishness into the centre of the room.

YOU told a child to get out, because he was lining up cars (including a police car which offended your sensitive soul) against your foot, and Jesus was he annoying you.

YOU were almost the only person in the room — we went around the whole room to find out — to admit being annoyed by the child.

But why was the child there in the first place? You'd hinted he was hung up on his mother. NO, he was there because he didn't like the 'creche'.

It wasn't a creche. It was a room with a couple of loving people, and a couple of half-hearted people, trying to fill in the kids' time. A kid knows that scene only too well. Mine got out.

But why was the creche so bad? Because YOU! and people like you! didn't want to be there. You felt that kids shouldn't have to come to the weekend: that the parents should have better alternative lifestyles so the kids don't have to come to the weekend (and bother the REAL people, the ones that do the talking).

You're the epitome of angry, male, rip-off merchant, theoretician. Talk, talk, talk, patriarchy is dead, eat, drink, what other people prepare . . . sexism is dead, Long Live Sexism.

You took up two hours of discussion time talking about kids and creches and intelligent women you've known (WHOSE INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY YOU JUDGED TO BE EQUAL WITH YOURS!) who after motherhood have become vague and preoccupied with domestic things. You wasted our time discussing whether kids (mothers) should exist! Shouldn't all women be free to talk, fuck, create . . . ? Yes, till it's tea-time and you're hungry.

Didn't somebody say, patriarchy was founded by men who needed mothers, lost men?

And then, when another woman suggested you never helped in creches and now was as good a time as any to start, didn't you hum and haw and prevaricate. And didn't you say there was no point, no good for the kids either, in your doing 'penance' when you didn't feel like it anyway. And how could we not agree with you? We don't want our kids fucked up by reluctant jailkeepers. Oh yes, kids are great but you'll make sure you never discover it.

And until you do, you'll always be proud and angry and screwed up. You'll always wonder why your revolution never comes. But I know why.

And I'm angry, so angry, with you for reminding me why.

Dear Tom,

I have been feeling sad and hurt by what happened at our meeting. I have been angry too, but until just now I hadn't been able to admit it fully. Now that I have written out my anger there is room in me for other feelings I experienced at the time.

I arrived in the morning feeling sad, and exhausted from the journey, although it was only two hours. I had been badly depressed for about a week.

But as soon as I arrived the weary and sad feelings began to fade. People were smiling, warming me. People I knew well, people I'd met once perhaps, people I'd never seen before. The place was busy and gentle.

The talking began and it was gentle too. People were eager to listen and watch . . . almost it seemed, reluctant to talk, to dominate.

I saw you come in and recognised you. I'd seen you once before and then too you had been talking about getting rid of kids.

I didn't like you. I also found you magnetic and beautiful. I met you in a doorway and I knew you wouldn't smile. Very shut in, that bloke, I thought. No smiles — too dangerous for him.

Then it was the afternoon and just when I wanted to be quiet and listen to others, for reassurance about my old ideas and for new ones (I was so winter-bound and dull at the time) . . . just at that point I found myself pitched into a two-hour duel with you.

The child you had attacked for his presence was my child: that made the tussle my burden. It was shared, lovingly, by several other people in the room. I felt supported and ready to accept criticism of me if it had come. It came only from you.

The struggle became ugly: male versus female. War. That was one I had thought I wouldn't have to fight again. I know so many good, gentle men . . . and I can laugh at much of what the others do. But you reminded me of the anger I felt years ago against men. I couldn't get away from the anger; it came back as strong as before. And part of my anger was rage with myself when I recognised a sexual, yes it's very hard to say it, a female response to your male sparring.

I always get angry with myself when I react like that to a man. I'm sure it's part of the male game too.

But afterwards I wanted to meet you and take your hands or put my arms around you and say soft, kind, forgiving, neutralising things to you. To touch and dissolve your ridiculous, unnecessary aloneness.

And again I was angry with myself. Typical female, falling for a male con-trick, I muttered to myself.

But if you hadn't already left, I would have said those kind things to you, I think.

At some point in the argument you said, I quite like her (me) really. Even when my anger was bitterest, I could feel glad that you said you 'quite liked' me, whatever that meant.

I would like . . . I think . . . to be your friend.

NEWS

RACISM: What about Asian women?

Recent racial clashes in East London, Southall, Bradford and Blackburn have culminated in four deaths. Ann Rossiter reports on attacks on Asian women in particular:

The "immigrant problem" has been widely seized on, not only by the National Front and the National Party, but also by prominent members of the Labour Government.

Scare stories of Malawi Asian families being put up in four-star hotels have hogged the headlines. The leakage to Enoch Powell of a secret government report claiming that hordes of Asian dependents are about to descend on Britain, and confused accounts of the number of immigrants

already here, have led many white workers to blame the Asian or West Indian when their jobs are threatened and their standard of living cut.

In fact a campaign of harassment and violence against the black immigrant community has been going on for a long time. Here in the London Borough of Newham, West Indian and Asian families scattered on mainly white council estates, especially in the Canning Town area, live with permanently broken windows, have their gardens dug up, their children punched and beaten.

Jostled on the Stairs
Papers on fire and parcels of shit arrive regularly through the letter boxes. Especially assiduous white neighbours cause the families to receive frequent, unsolicited visits

from the police, the fire brigade, the Public Health Inspector, even the Pest Officer.

The victimisation is often petty, but persistent: irate taxi-drivers ring doorbells in the night, called to Asians who had no intention of taking a taxi ride at 3am; their milk-orders are altered overnight so that there are not one or two, but twelve bottles on the doorstep in the morning.

Women, house-bound and isolated, get the worst deal. Living in high-rise tenements, they are insulted and jostled on the stairs and may end up not going out at all, forced to take expensive grocery deliveries.

Frequently, with no-one to turn to, with no support from their husband and his family, and unable to speak

English, they suffer severe mental stress and related physical disorders. Some have attempted suicide, often successfully — they could no longer face such hatred.

"Policing" the Parks

Those living in areas with a higher density of immigrants have been relatively free of such attacks, at least on their own doorsteps. But since early June organised gangs of white men and boys have patrolled certain streets in East Ham, Stratford, Plaistow, Leytonstone and Upton Park, looking for lone Asians. Women shopping in East Ham market have been stoned and had their saris set on fire.

For men, this means they must return from work in groups; for women, it means almost total confinement in the home. Some mothers are ▶

reluctant to let their daughters go out to work.

While the younger children encounter plenty of hostility at school, there have so far been no reports of physical violence. It's a different story in the local parks where some play in the evening. These are now "policed" by white youths, and Asians are forcibly barred.

Rejecting "Uncle Tom"

The Asian community's determination not to lie down under the current wave of racism, directed specifically at them, has been courageous. The young men are rejecting the "Uncle Tom" stance of their parents and the traditional religious leaders, who try to please whites with their hard work and humility, and plead with Roy Jenkins to protect them. They are coming to see that neither the state nor the police will help.

The young men have been militant and vocal, but Asian women, young and old, have kept quiet. It's not that Asian women are passive — the strikes at Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Typewriters proved that — but it's difficult for them to speak out about physical attack.

Molestation of a woman's body is seen by her community as an attack on her dignity and honour — this is especially true for Moslem women. She will do almost anything to hide the incident. Only rarely are newspapers or the social services told directly.

Such publicity would mean difficulties in arranging marriages for herself or her children. In some cases the woman might even be "out-cast". She would then be excluded from all social functions, such as marriage celebrations, and left alone in times of death or trouble in the family.

Three or four Punjabi women were recently attacked near Oak Lane in Bradford by a group of men who tried to drag down their *shalwar* (the voluminous Punjabi trousers). The women refused to make a complaint to the police; they wouldn't even discuss the incident with members of their own community.

With so many contradictions within the Asian community, with attempts to divide West Indians from Asians, with every possible obstacle in the way of black and white unity, the struggle against racism and growing fascism in Britain will be long and hard. □

Australia: a crime to be raped

If you report rape in Queensland, Australia, you're likely to be charged yourself — with making a false complaint.

"It is the experience of the courts that women and girls for all sorts of reasons, and sometimes for no reason at all, tell a false story . . ."

So says the Queensland Criminal Code about evidence in rape trials.

The Queensland police take the law seriously. Two recent trials of rape victims on charges of making false complaints made it clear to Australian women that the law is not concerned with their rights.

Margaret was gang-raped by nine men in the Queensland bush where she was abandoned, half naked and distraught. She found her way to a house where the police were called. Medical examinations showed she had recently had intercourse.

The police interrogated her for eight hours during which she was given no food and only a glass of water to drink. She was able to identify her attackers but the police pressured her into dropping her complaint. She was then charged with making a false complaint, brought to trial and acquitted. The prosecution characterised her as mentally deficient, incapable of knowing whether or not she had been raped; the court decided she had not knowingly laid a false complaint.

"Get a Man to Support You"

Irene, a 28-year-old single mother, pressed charges against her attacker. She too was medically examined and gave statements to the police. Three

days later she was summonsed to answer charges of making a false complaint. The police had questioned her assailant and decided she was lying.

The magistrate agreed with the police. In his summing up he criticised Irene's single status, told her to get a man to support her and convicted her. She appealed against his decision and won.

Irene was supported in her fight by A WAR, a national campaign which started in March to focus attention on the plight of rape victims and to fight against the injustices built into the rape laws.

Women all round Australia protested against Irene's conviction and demanded an end to the legal persecution of rape victims. They notified women's groups all over the world; telegrams were sent to the Queensland Ministry for Justice. Demonstrations were held in all states. In Queensland police attacked the protestors, arresting three.

Disbelief a Deterrent

Rape is at least as common in Australia as it is in the USA. Police attitudes to rape range from indifferent to punitive — towards the victim.

The use of the false complaint charge against women who report rape had only one precedent in Queensland before these two trials. The Australian women's movement thinks the charge is being used to deter women from reporting rape. An estimated one in ten rapes is reported in Australia, and of those that go on trial, only four in ten cases result in a conviction.

On average, the police reject 50–60% of all complaints — because there is insufficient corroborative evidence or because they don't believe the

complainant. These rejections are all listed as false complaints.

Gangs and Few Strangers

The rape crisis centres which have been set up in the major cities are overwhelmed with calls from raped women. Delia Dumaesque of the centre in Sydney says they have found that 70% of the victims knew their attackers and that roughly 44% of rapes are gang-rapes, compared with 9% in America.

In their campaign to heighten public awareness of violence to women, the Sydney collective puts up posters where a rape has taken place. These proclaim RAPIST ATTACKED WOMAN and if possible give a general description of the rapist.

The women's movement is also fighting to have the law changed. Australian rape laws are derived from English common law, which requires the victim to establish her innocence, and women are reluctant to press charges. The Sydney collective proposes a law based on the Criminal Sexual Conduct legislation of Michigan, USA. Under this law the victim does not have to prove that she didn't invite rape. □

Victoria Green

BRITAIN: RAPE BILL LOST?

A Private Member's Bill to improve the law on rape, "talked out" on May 18 by John Lee, didn't come up as scheduled on June 18.

Its passage now depends on the Government granting it more time, and time is short. Even if it does go through the Commons, it's unlikely to get through the Lords before the session ends in August.

The Bill proposes that rape victims should remain anonymous and that their previous sexual history should not be used in evidence, unless considered relevant to the case.

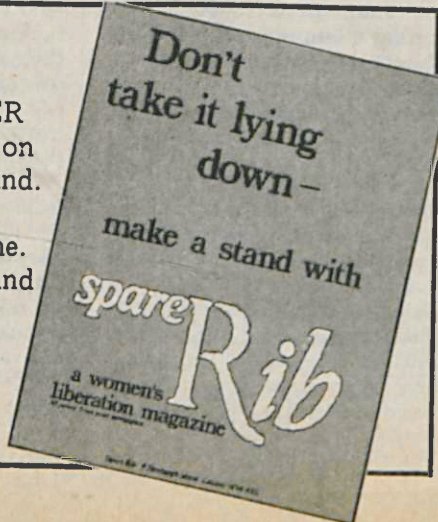
Its proposer, Robin Corbett, recognises its limitations and thinks it will affect only marginally the ordeal the rape victim faces in court. In that, he agrees with the Rape Crisis Centre collective who can't see it making much difference at all.

The debate in the Commons did point up the prejudice

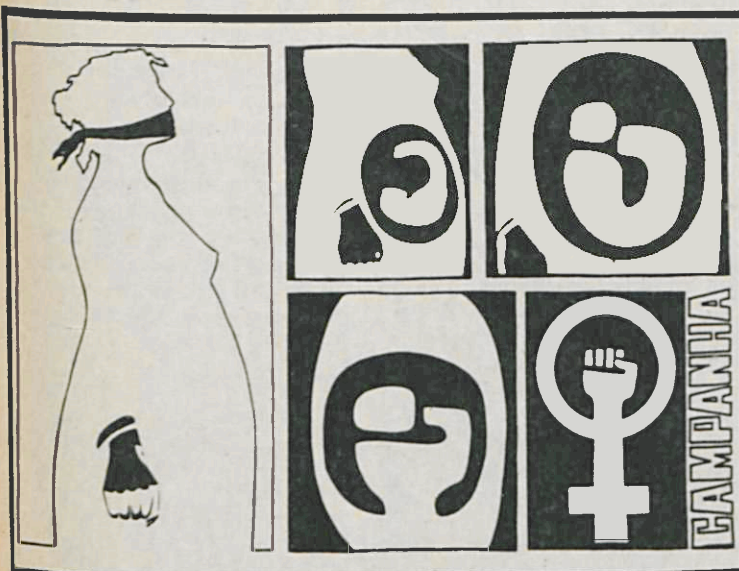
STICK IT UP!

NEW SPARE RIB
PUBLICITY POSTER
23½" x 16½", black on
bright pink background.
Get your copies to
publicise the magazine.
Send name, address and
postage.

2 copies 6½p
5 copies 11p
9 copies 17p
11 copies 20p
19 copies 32p
other rates on request.



FOREIGN NEWS



Brazilian poster

BRAZIL: WOMEN CENSORED

It was an ironic coincidence that the federal censor in Brazil vetoed over 90% of a special edition of the weekly Sao Paulo newspaper *Movimento* on the conditions of Brazil's 33 million women workers only a few days before UNESCO announced Brazil as one of six countries chosen for a study of women's conditions.

283 out of 306 pages were cut, 58 from 69 pictures, 6 out of 7 drawings and 10 out of 12 tables. No reason was given for censorship and *Movimento* journalists are fighting the decision.

The censored report revealed that women are concentrated in jobs with the worst pay and conditions, such as domestic service and agriculture.

In domestic work for instance, one city survey showed only 3% paid more than \$20 a month, with no union and their only right being to spend 8% of their low wages on health insurance. In agriculture women are often paid via their husbands.

Research also showed that men in any industry in Sao Paulo earned 57% more than the women, and a national survey done in 1973 showed 54.8% women in the lowest wage-band compared with 39.4% men. □

Sue Sharpe

rape victims face. The Bill was changed on Government advice to stipulate that accused men should remain anonymous unless convicted — with the proviso that the defendant could apply to have the restriction lifted if he wanted the case reported.

Rape within Marriage?

The Bill's supporters also agreed to drop perhaps the most radical clause — allowing wives to charge their husbands with rape.

Rees-Davies (who "talked out" the Domestic Violence Bill) claimed it would be "absolutely and hopelessly wrong" for a husband to be charged with rape if the couple still lived together.

Jack Ashley supported this clause: "It is totally wrong for the wedding ring to be the licence for unlimited sexual intercourse at any time. If a wife does not consent to sexual intercourse, then in my view she is being raped."

John Lee's first move was against the clause restricting the use of the victim's sexual history as evidence. He repeatedly referred to the victim as the "defendant", saying she shouldn't have preferential treatment. (In fact the defendant at a rape trial doesn't have his previous sexual history used against him — only the victim suffers that.)

Lee failed to win support for his amendment but did manage to get the Bill delayed simply by talking until time ran out. Now it looks as if the Bill is lost. □

Victoria Green

Rape Crisis Centre Emergency
Number 01-340 6145 (24
hours a day).

USA: SOME REVOLUTION!

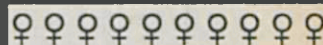
A building in downtown Detroit purchased to house the headquarters of the Feminist Economic Network (FEN), the Detroit Feminist Federal Credit Union, a women's clinic and women's businesses has opened as the Feminist Women's City Club.

Club membership (\$100) entitles members to bar and cafe privileges, discounts in

the retail shops and use of the club's pool, lounges and meeting rooms. The 46 suites in the club will be available for \$20 a night for members and guests, and men will be allowed into the bar and cafe when escorted by a woman.

One of FEN's directors, Laura Brown, apparently said: "This is the biggest financial undertaking the feminist movement has ever embarked upon. This is the beginning of the feminist economic revolution." And besides, the pool is a fine place to cool off after a hard day in the sweatshops. □

from off our backs



SUPER SERVICES

Astrology : Gardening : Typing

Electrical Repairs & Rewiring

Hair Cutting : Removals

Cushions Covered : Upholstery

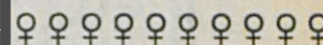
Interior Decorating : Typesetting

: etc :

By Women for Women

01-229 0145

80 Lancaster Road London W11



SUSAN LAMBERT

7,000 people demonstrated in New York on June 11 in protest against the proposed closing down of 49 childcare centres.

3,500 children and 1,500 staff will be directly affected — and last December when 28 centres were closed, 400 others were laid off.

WORK NEWS

NEWS COPY DATES

Spare Rib 50 is on sale from August 18. News stories for that issue should reach us by July 22. It will help us to plan the section if you can let us know in advance what you want to write about and roughly how long it will be. For No.51 the news copy-date is August 19. (If it's urgent, it's worth trying after these dates.)

"WE'RE OUT TILL WE WIN"

When women at Trico's demanded equal pay, management suggested the men took a cut in wages...

"I've been working here at Trico's for 27 years, and in all that time I've never been on strike. But we had a mass meeting out in the park beside the factory back in May and on hearing that all negotiations for equal pay had broken down, we decided there and then that that was it. We weren't going back in till we got it.

"My husband's the chairman of the shop-stewards committee, in the same union as us — the AUEW — and although the strike's official, he's still in there working."

This was what one woman on the picket line said to Jan O'Malley when she went down to hand over a cheque for the strike fund from her group, the West London National Abortion Campaign.

Trico-Folberth is an American-owned car accessory factory in Brentford. Of 1,500 employees (including office staff), 400 are women, mainly in production work. About 5-600 men also work on the shop floor.

There are only twelve male operators doing the same work as most of the women. It was lucky that there were these twelve to whom the women could be directly compared — otherwise they would have had no hope of equal pay.

For years these men had been paid about £6.50 a week more than the women. Last

September negotiations began between the AUEW and management, and in December the Equal Pay Act came into force with the management still holding out against equal pay.

Two more attempts were made by the union to negotiate. Then on May 24 they announced at a mass meeting that there was a "failure to agree" and that all procedures were exhausted. The meeting voted almost unanimously for strike action. All the women and the twelve men came out.

On May 27 the District Committee of the AUEW made the strike official at a district level.

Inflexible Females

At first the shop stewards committee was split over the strike. Many male stewards continued to work. Sally Groves, on the strike committee, said: "Management have worked overtime to poison the minds of those left in the factory."

They have also tried to maximise divisions between the workers. As well as arguing that equal pay could best be achieved by the men taking a cut in wages, they claimed that the men were more flexible than the women as they could be moved from job to job more easily, and switched from day to night shift. But in fact the night shift was recently cut altogether, and the men tend to stay put in the same job just as the women do.

The men did show some support by a one-day strike on June 9, but the women feel that any men still working in the factory are scabs.

On June 15 AUEW declared the strike official nationally. (This is the first AUEW strike to become official for many months, mainly because of the strait-jacket of the incomes policy.) Since then many of the men who are in the union and work on the shop floor have come out in support.

Marching round Town

During the strike the women have discovered — many for the first time — their own strength and ability to organise.

All kinds of women work there: young and old, Indian, Irish, West Indian and English, some with husbands and children, and some without. Together they have set up a Strike Committee, organised a picketing rota and set up a committee to distribute the hardship fund, which has already topped £600.

In the first week of the strike 300 of them marched round neighbouring factories in Brentford to let them know about their struggle. This was followed up with collections there for the strike fund. They also contacted workers at firms like Ford's and British Leyland to get them to black Trico products.

This has been very successful, and as Trico has the monopoly on windscreen wipers, the car industry will be hit hard when old stocks run out.

Sitting in for SS

Management response to this pressure is to urge the women to take their case to an industrial tribunal — and in

the meantime return to work. Obviously they're hoping to find a way around the Act in court. But the women are determined to stay out till they win.

Their main problem is money. The single women have been claiming social security under Section 13 — "urgent need and hardship" — and they've come up against the usual prejudices against strikers.

Ealing DHSS did pay up in the middle of June, but the Hounslow office wouldn't. So on June 18 nine of the women refused to leave the building at the end of the day. Thirteen policemen came to throw them out — Sally Groves was dragged head-first down three flights of stairs.□

Jan O'Malley and
Jill Nicholls

Women's groups can express their solidarity by sending contributions to: Trico Strike Fund, AUEW House, 1 Woodlands Rd, Southall, Middx.

EQUAL PAY: "an allowable addition"

Equal pay rises *will* be allowed over and above the pay limit for 1976-77. This has now been confirmed by the Government.

When Healey first announced the pay guidelines, there was great confusion about the position of equal pay. But as *Spare Rib* pointed out last month, the Equal Pay Act, with all its limitations, is law, and cannot be overruled by a "voluntary" pay deal.

Questioned by Labour MPs Eric Heffer and Jeff Rooker, the Minister of State for Employment, Harold Walker, said: "Under the TUC proposals for the period from August 1, the overall pay figure would in general be applied in the same way as in the current policy."

"This means that any

increase that might be necessary in particular cases in order to comply with the Equal Pay Act would be an allowable addition. But as the Act has been in operation since 29 December 1975, there should not be large numbers of these cases."

In other words — we've all got equal pay. But if you're one of the unlucky few who somehow slipped through the net, you'll still be allowed to make your equal pay claim.

So why did women's earnings only rise from 51.1% of men's in 1972 to 55.5% in October 1975 — as the Low Pay Unit showed?

The Department of Employment estimated that equal pay claims have added only 3½% to the national wages bill. Not enough to make much impression on the gap between men's and women's wages.

The NCCL are pushing the Government to make an unambiguous public statement that equal pay rises are still allowed. Wide publicity is needed to stop employers using the pay limit as an excuse. And more important, to encourage women to continue their fight for equal pay. This doesn't mean just taking cases to industrial tribunals.

Will pay rises won through industrial action be allowed after August 1? The Department of Employment says yes — so long as they aren't trying to go further than the Act.

But will the DoE risk coming down hard on pay rises they think would not be upheld by a tribunal? □ Judy Mallaber

AROUND THE TRIBUNALS...

At the Kraft cheese factory in Liverpool the women quality controllers will continue to get £12.45 a week less than the men. Why? Because they would have to cross a catwalk to reach one department, and men below might peer up their skirts ...

Sue Waddington, employed by Leicester Council for Voluntary Service, is paid £400 a year less than a younger man doing a job she created and supervises. But as her job involves greater responsibility, there are no grounds for equal pay ...

Chorus line dancers claimed they were underpaid for doing the same work as men in the Val Doonican Christmas Season Show — and the judge agreed on once. They got £112 back pay each. □

AU PAIRS: Servants or Guests?

"We are interested in your work, not your English accent," French au pair Paulette was told by her 'employer'.

Paulette earns £5 on top of her keep for a six day week and very often has to babysit in the evenings. Learning English was her main motive for coming over and au pairing had sounded ideal in her case — no English friends and very little money.

Relying on the agency's assurance, she was confident that she was going to be treated as a member of the family and have ample time to herself. In fact Paulette is often so exhausted by housework that she hasn't time to read, let alone study.

Her case is not exceptional. "I came during winter," Ghilaine said. "It's not

especially nice here in winter, in a family, working, working all day; having to put up with the hypocrisy of the 'landlady', who exploits you under the guise of asking you a favour."

Leafletting Language Schools Home Office regulations relating to au pairs state that "the relationship should be on the basis of social equality and not on a mistress-servant basis". They also limit the work to five or six hours a day.

But: "Even if you are happy with your situation, you have no guarantee." This is the last sentence of a leaflet urging au pairs to organise. The women who put out the leaflet demand better pay and working conditions, improvement of legal rights, better and cheaper language instruction, an end to the abuses of the au pair agencies and also support from English people.

They have distributed the leaflet in several language schools. Response is very slow but from September onward

there will be regular meetings. "We don't want trouble with the agencies, in case people get sent back. And it's hard to organise in the family. It feels like being a rebellious child."

Au pair agencies' fees range from £20—40, to be paid by the au pair and the 'employer'. Placing au pairs is their only concern. They don't seem to be under any obligation to find another family if the au pair is dissatisfied. The only alternative they offered Paulette's friend was a full-time job in a hotel for £10 a week.

"It's difficult to know how to act," says Ghilaine. "We need a union and could perhaps go on strike for overtime pay and a minimum wage of £10. The agencies won't protect us; they obey supply and demand rules." □

Anny Brackx

For details of future activities and meetings contact Michelle Newmans, 4 Cricklewood Lane, London NW2 (01-450 2388).



JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)

On the picket line at Stability Capacitors in Basildon, Essex, where 150 women were fighting for a £6 pay rise.

The firm promised the rise a year ago, then postponed it last November, claiming they couldn't afford to pay more than £27.80 a week. But they're a subsidiary of the Lucas electrical combine, which made £32.3 million profit in 1975.

The women, who joined the TGWU in March, came out on strike on June 8. "We've had enough," said convenor Dot Horgan (second from right). "They want it all one way — their way. They wouldn't make one concession to us."

A week later management offered £4. The women went back to work and are still negotiating. □

SHORTLIST

Please send information to **Anny Brackx, Shortlist** Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh St., London W1A 4XS.

events

Events are listed chronologically

Feminist History

Sarah Elbutt of the University of New York will lecture on 'Domestic Feminism and the Problem of Cultural Hegemony 1870-1915'. This women only seminar organised by the Feminist History Group will take place on July 15 at the Women's Research and Resources Centre, 158 North Gower St, London NW1, starting 7.30pm. Information about the group from Jean L'Esperance (01-858 3045).

Abortion

The next national planning meeting of the National Abortion Campaign will be in Leicester on July 17. The main items on the agenda are the form that the national tribunal should take and the annual conference. Planning meetings are open to all members of NAC groups or affiliated organisations. Details from NAC (01-485 4303).

Cyprus Solidarity Week

"Please support us in our demand to unite Cyprus: no partition, one country for one people. Rally July 18, 2pm Hyde Park Corner and march to Trafalgar Square. There will also be a women's all night vigil outside the Turkish embassy on July 20 starting at 7.30pm." For details contact Jean Pavett, 29 Grosvenor Rd, London W4 (01-994 0445).

Save the Hospital

There will be a benefit to help save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital on July 23 from 8pm to 1am at the Architectural Association, 35 Bedford Square, London WC1. There will be a bar and Frankie Armstrong and the Stepney Sisters will be singing and playing. Women only. Entrance 50p.

Childminding

There will be a National Childminding conference on July 23/24 at Bradford College. Contact the National Educational Research and Development Trust, 32 Trumpington St, Cambridge (0223-59126) for details.

Lesbian Action

CLAN, the Campaign for Lesbian Action Now, was set up as a response to several women being injured by men, after a disco during the Bristol lesbian conference. The campaign has now groups all over the country. A general meeting is planned for July 24 in Oxford. For details and the first issue of the newsletter write to

CLAN, Bristol Women's Centre, 59 Lower Union St, Bristol 1.

Smoking in Pregnancy

A Women's Research and Resources Centre seminar with speaker Hilary Graham (Research Fellow at York University) on July 30, starting 7.30, at the WRRRC as above.

Nottingham Women's Disco

On July 31 and every six weeks after that at The Yorker, Mansfield Rd from 8-11.30 pm. Entrance 30p. Also, the lounge bar of the White Horse Inn, Ilkeston Rd is now open every Tuesday evening from 8pm as a women's bar.

Wessex Gingerbread Week

From August 1 to 7. Groups throughout the region will be staging events to raise funds for and promote Gingerbread, the Association for One Parent Families. On August 7 there will be an all day Gingerbread Fayre on Southampton Common. Further info from Jean Cooper, 19 Southfield Rd, Worthing, Sussex (Worthing 207957).

Women's Health

The second Women and Health conference is planned for October 2/3 in Manchester. Contact Grass Roots Bookshop, 109 Oxford Rd, Manchester.

A New World for Women?

'Women in Media' are planning a seminar on the working of the Sex Discrimination Act, for October 23, to be held at Bedford College, Regent's Park, London NW1 (Tuke Hall). Workshops on childcare, sexism in education, discrimination in jobs, protective legislation and the operation of the Equal Opportunities Commission. The fee is £3 per person, which includes buffet lunch, creche and tea. Apply to Women in Media, 103 Elgin Crescent, London W11, before July 31.

'Women in Eastern Europe'

A working conference planned for October 30 at Birmingham University. "The idea is to bring together all who have a particular interest in this field." Written contributions should reach Barbara Holland, CREES, Birmingham University, Birmingham, before October 1. Papers will be circulated to all women, registering in advance (50p).

Women's Liberation Conference 1977

The next National Women's Liberation Conference is to be

held at Easter or Whitsun 1977 in London. There have been two planning meetings already. Sisters wanting to help are welcome to come to future meetings. A pooled fares system could be organised for those living outside London. If you cannot come send your ideas to the Women's Liberation Workshop. We could have a conference that lasted for four days, giving us more time for discussion and to enjoy ourselves... Do we want the conference in Central London where women will have access to restaurants and be able to stay with friends; or a location where women will all stay, eat and remain together throughout the weekend. For date, time and place of the next meeting phone the Women's Liberation Workshop (01-836 6081), 38 Earlam St, London WC2.

plays

'Hot Peaches'

"A group of gay women and men creating gay political cabaret which reflects their lifestyles in the streets of New York." Their theatre, rather than attempting to explain a gay lifestyle, celebrates it,

12 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1 from August 11 to 14.

'Pirate Jenny'

Formerly 'West London Theatre Workshop', this mixed company present their new play *Breaker's Yard*, "a play about education that looks under the skin of a system that affects us all — for life". What 'Pirate Jenny' are not interested in is "2-D working class caricatures who conveniently spout the Right Line". They are socialists who want a theatre "which neither spoonfeeds nor insults the audience". They are doing a week's run at the ICA as above.

campaigns

Fight against Racism

"As women in the Asian Socialist Forum, we feel that the question of the oppression of black women is particularly poignant and one which has not been seriously taken up by any of the groups of the left including the women's movement." The Forum wants to form a permanent body which will "actively and consistently" discuss and take up the struggle against racism. Contact Sonia Khan for future meetings, 22 Boundary Rd, London NW8 (01-328 2332).



Hot Peaches

giving, they hope, gay brothers and sisters a feeling of self-pride... They think of themselves as a cross between the Andrew Sisters and the Marx Brothers, but not so as you'd recognise it, they add. They are on at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Nash House,

Abortion

The National Abortion Campaign is still collecting evidence in favour of better abortion facilities. The national tribunal, through which the evidence will be made public, will take place in December. Anyone who wants to work

with the tribunal coordinating committee should contact NAC, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

centres

Leeds

The centre has opened at 42 Leicester Grove, Leeds 7. This is off Blackman Lane near the centre of town, the university, polytechnic, WIRES and the Gay Information Centre.

Colchester

The Colchester Women's Information Centre is in Culver St. "We have weekly meetings at the above address every Monday 8pm. We also attempt to run an information service for women and are open Tuesday 10-12am, Wednesday 6-8pm, Thursday 12-2pm and Saturday 10-12am. We are considering doing free pregnancy testing in the future."

services

Creche

"We are men who want to spend time with children. If you or your group are interested in us organising a creche in the London area, evenings or weekends, please ring at least ten days before and we'll see what we can sort out together. Regular arrangements will be considered in the Hackney/Islington area. Ask for Nigel at (01-254 5821) or Brad at (01-249 3768).

Hallo Friend...

London FRIEND offers telephone counselling to gay women by gay women every Tuesday and Friday 7.30-10pm. (01-359 7371). There are also drop-in evenings for gay women every Thursday 7.45-10pm at FRIEND, 274 Upper St, London N1.

projects

Women and the Hazards of Work

A group is now researching into industrial health hazards which particularly affect women. They welcome any information on the subject, especially on struggles around health and safety in the workplace. They can be contacted c/o Science for People, 9 Poland St, London W1 (01-437 2728).

Power Over Our Bodies

"Essex Rd Women's Health Group urgently needs money to buy more pregnancy tests, medical books, blood pressure equipment, a microscope, and an anglepoise lamp. We would be grateful for any help (money or equipment). We are open on Monday afternoons

from 3-6.30pm." Essex Rd Women's Health Group, 108 Essex Rd, London N1.

Merseyside People's History
"Merseyside People's History Group would like to make contact with anyone who has memories of involvement in the feminist, political or labour movement on Merseyside. Contact the group at 25 Tumilty Avenue, Bootle, L20 9HU (051-521 5763).

journals & articles

Country Women

This American magazine written and produced by feminists living in the country focusses on a different topic each time. Past issues include spirituality, older women, children's liberation, cycles, foremothers, sexuality, women working, feminism and relationships, politics, and mental and physical health. Future issues will include food, women as artists, class, personal power, anger and violence. There is also a series of practical articles on car mechanics, gardening, care of animals, etc... Themes are explored in depth and often in a personal way. It is the best magazine I have seen to come out of the women's movement, here or in the USA. It is a special joy to me, a country woman, to be able to share so fully the experiences and struggles of others in similar situations.

Available in England from Anima Rising, 86 King St, Lancaster, at 70p per issue or £2.80 for four issues (incl. postage). Most of the back issues mentioned are still available, and well worth the money.

Mary Lewis

pamphlets

Redstockings

Redstockings' *Feminist Revolution* is a crucial text for the movement now, reformulating the 'Pro-Woman Line' of pioneers like Firestone, Koedt, Willis and Sarachild: "The locus of women's oppression is not culture but power, men's class power." "If women are 'brainwashed' it's because facing their powerlessness is too painful; as we build a movement, as we organise to attack the institutions that keep us down, our psychic defences will go too." "You don't reach most women by toning yourself down, by lying about your needs and desires. That's the kind of deceit you use against people you really consider your enemies or your inferiors. It doesn't work with the people who are on your side, with your own people."

How did that first revolutionary identification of women get eroded by psychoanalysis, lesbian chauvinism, 'Marxist' dogmatism, counter-culture/straight female careerism? Redstockings start by taking seriously and in detail the history of our own movement. The group are best known in England for their press release linking Gloria Steinem with the CIA — frightening reading with so many American sisters in gaol; but I was more convinced by Willis' article showing how the politics of *Ms* magazine work for the state and against the collective consciousness of women.

In spite of my excitement with the pamphlet I have to admit it's sometimes paranoid, often sectarian, uncritically Maoist and heterosexist (the last two seem to go together). So read with care — but read, read!

Available from Compendium and Rising Free bookshops in London at £1.75 per copy or from Redstockings, PO Box 413, New Paltz, NY 12561, at \$3 per copy. Two articles 'The retreat to cultural feminism' and 'Consciousness raising, a radical weapon' also reprinted in *Catcall* No.2 and available as leaflets from the Women's Liberation Workshop.

Amanda Sebestyen

New Life in Portugal

The Portuguese revolution took place on April 25 1974. Since then 2½ million acres of unused land have been taken over by farmworkers. They set up cooperative farms on land which is in the main still the legal property of absentee landlords.

New Life in Portugal deals with the authors' visit to a cooperative farm in the Alentejo and the people they met on that visit. They describe in a simple but gripping way the spirit of solidarity among a coachload of Lisbon workers, on their way to help farmworkers with the olive harvest. Conversations with farmworkers bring out the trials and tribulations of setting up cooperatives, distributing the produce in the face of boycotts by big business, organising nurseries, health centres and hospitals and how conditions have changed since the overthrow of fascism. Unfortunately (or is it predictable) the revolution seems not to have changed woman's role of obedient wife, cooking and ladling out food.

New Life in Portugal, Impressions and pictures of a newly born cooperative farm by Regina Fischer and Cyril Pustan is available from Kay Beauchamp, 45 Clissold Court, Green Lanes, London N4. Single copies 20p; special terms for bulk orders.



From Perth Free Press

Fighting for Feminism

Fighting for Feminism, the 'Women Question' in an Italian revolutionary group is a Big Flame Women's Group publication and an important contribution to the current discussion on left wing politics and the autonomous women's movement. Lotta Continua, the 'revolutionary group' in question had been active since 1969 in the struggles against exploitation of southern Italians working in northern factories, the university students and community struggles, the latter involving mainly working class women. When in 1973 Lotta Continua declared itself a party they still had not developed a "basic thesis on women". This contradiction was exposed in the debate that followed an incident involving a mixed group of Lotta Continua members; carrying a banner they tried to fight their way into a women only pro-abortion demonstration (December 1975) which was to have no banners of left wing groups. The pamphlet concentrates on the debate which ensued. The translated letters, articles and reports from Lotta Continua's daily paper are exciting reading; the discussion on feminism had opened ways of re-examining the contents of the class struggle, the party's "leadership structures at all levels and the tools of political intervention and organisation". Equally striking is the constant emphasis on self-criticism and the concept that "dirty sheets must be washed among the masses".

Available from Rising Free Bookshop, London. Price 10p per copy.

London Women's Conference

A report is being compiled of the discussions in the workshops at the London Conference (June 5/6). It will be available from 4a Queen's Rd, London SE15.

HOME NEWS

Women Against the Dust

"There is nothing the matter with my husband now, but all I can do until his dying day is just hope that nothing is wrong with him. Because he'll never reach the age when I can say, 'We're safe now, everything is going to be alright because he has passed this age or that age or hasn't worked for this many years'.

"It could happen absolutely any time. For all our lives it is hanging over our heads. You have got to wait and hope, and every year your tummy flutters when you go for your X-ray."

Pat Turnbull's husband works with asbestos, which gives off dust that can cause a deadly lung disease. But Pat and a group of other women in the same situation are doing more than just wait and hope.

They have formed a pressure group, "Women Against the Dust", to provide the factual backing so necessary to the asbestos workers' struggle, which is far from over. Even after disasters like that at Acre Mill in Hebden Bridge, where 40 employees of Cape Industries died recently, employers have changed their attitude very little. Safe conditions and protective clothing are uncommon because they cost money and, as one woman put it, "The law puts people away for murder while others get rich on death."

A Jolt, Not a Joke

Heavy concentrations of asbestos dust have been illegal in factories since 1931. But government regulations are not implemented. Of 600 men in the Glasgow branch of the GMWU, 92 have asbestosis. No statistics are available on the number of deaths or on the incidence of asbestos-induced diseases, because such statistics would be strong ammunition in the fight for better conditions. They would be so shocking that the government might have to force employers to provide protection.

"Women Against the Dust" are trying to collect these figures. It's not easy because even if someone dies of asbestosis, the cause of death cannot be confirmed without an autopsy. They have a questionnaire (see below) which they would like anyone who has had any association with asbestos to fill in.

"When we started the group," says Pat Turnbull, "we were full of ideas of picketting outside hospitals. We all went down to the Isle of Grain, where a strike was on over a safety issue. Everyone thought it was a wonderful idea. But it

was foolish really. It was of no purpose. It got the children freezing cold. It got us in the papers alright. There was a picture of my little girl with a banner in one hand and a potty in the other. It was publicity, but it was a sort of joke. It wasn't what I intended for us to do, because I don't think it works. But if we can get the facts and figures and get them in the papers then I think something will be done. People get a jolt."

Washing Overalls

"Women Against the Dust", affiliated to a newly-formed national organisation "Asbestos Action", are not explicitly feminist. But neither are they acting under male direction. They are women fighting back along with men in the best way they can.

As far as we could tell, no women work in jobs directly handling asbestos. But in the asbestos industry whole families are under attack. Just washing work overalls can cause mesothelioma, a form of cancer, and asbestos-associated trades — such as building — often have no laundry arrangements. "Fitters, joiners and people who work with asbestos boarding — their wives are always washing in their washing machines."

Even if you don't have to wash overalls, living with asbestos can mean death. In children mesothelioma takes years to show up. It can be transmitted even to babies in the womb. In fact asbestos may be the cause of many cases diagnosed in the past as hereditary cancer. Not hereditary, but born of exploitation.

Who Compensates?

What happens to women whose husbands die? Getting compensation from the state or employers is a long hard job. It can mean years of fighting, vast sums spent on solicitors and in the end nothing.

What it amounts to is proving that the person got

Pat Turnbull of Romford, Essex, chairperson of Women Against The Dust.

asbestosis when on a particular job, and since asbestos workers are on contract to a series of employers this can be difficult. Asbestosis can take 20 or 30 years to show up; by the time the worker dies the firm may have gone out of business.

"Women Against the Dust" are demanding that all asbestos firms be made to register with a licence. (If they break the Asbestos Regulations they lose their licence.) The licence fees could go towards a central fund from which compensation could be paid, as a matter of course. Under this scheme, people working with asbestos would have the right to regular medical checkups. □

Amrit Wilson

"GIRLS IN NEED" WHOSE NEED?

"Women are better at repetitive jobs . . . perhaps because their minds are elsewhere" (regulation laughter from the audience).

So began the main talk, ostensibly about girls, given by a well-known male psychologist at a recent conference on "Girls in Need" convened by GALs — Girls Alone in London Service — an organisation with an advice centre and hostel in London. GALs felt the time had come to discuss such facts since stress among girls was of grave concern.

Unfortunately information passed from the expert to the avidly note-scribbling audience was considered only to be illuminating stress patterns in girls, not in any way contributing to them.

Sad too that in a talk where a real plea was made for recognition of adolescent identity, a demand akin to one women are making to be seen as people in our own right, that the speaker could only mirror traditional attitudes and dwell on time-honoured female images: sex symbol, wife and mother.

I am not denying the possibility of satisfaction with these, but they are all senses of "being" that are dependent on others. An unmarried woman is not a wife, a childless woman is not a mother. Moreover they are positions within the family.

The speaker offered little more than was available to me in my own dollygirlhood. One of the acceptable identities was as sex object, and in the proverbial adolescent search for identity, that is better than none. Ten years ago however the women's movement had not hit or even tapped Britain in the way it has now, or at

If you have any relevant information, fill in this questionnaire and return it to "Women Against the Dust", c/o Spare Rib. The statistics collected will be submitted to the government enquiry on asbestos. Because this enquiry is likely to be a whitewash, they will also be given to the press.

- 1) Have you ever worked with/been exposed to asbestos?
- 2) Were you aware of the health risk?
- 3a) Has any member of your family died of an asbestos-induced disease?
- 3b) If so, what was their occupation?
- 3c) Did they receive compensation?
- 4) Have you or your family suffered from: bronchitis, bronchial pneumonia, cor pulmonary, asbestosis, mesothelioma, cancer?

Can we save CHILD BENEFITS?

As reported last month, the Government has "postponed" indefinitely its much heralded child benefit scheme on the grounds that the drop in a married man's pay packet resulting from the withdrawal of child tax allowances would endanger the pay policy.

Leaked Cabinet minutes reveal that it was only at the last moment, when the Cabinet was deciding on the level of the child benefit, that the question of the implications for the pay policy were raised. Within a week the child benefit scheme, a central plank of Labour Party policy for years and already approved by Parliament, was abandoned.

What is forgotten by many people, including apparently Cabinet ministers, is that when the Child Benefit Bill was introduced into Parliament last year, the redistribution of income from husband to wife was put forward as the scheme's big selling point.

Pay Packet to Purse

It was argued that the mother "needs control of her own budget if the family is to be fed and clothed" and that "this Bill, transferring as it does the child tax relief from her husband's pay packet to her purse in the form of a cash allowance covering the first child is a further recognition of the importance of the job she is doing for society."

least not in Reading, where cosmetic and dress sales must have been boosted considerably by my pocket money and Wimpy bar wages (3 shillings an hour).

Securing the Family

Various cases were quoted: a girl who had a birthmark on her face was given expert advice by a cosmetician. "She dropped all her anti-authority, aggressive behaviour and became an amenable young person."

Who would have guessed that foundation cream was such an active agent of social control?

"All women want to be goddesses which is quite right. We are each other's sex objects and let's be proud of it."

Girls apparently need to

Yet the Government was just as obsessed with wage restraint then as it is now. Similarly, when giving its evidence to the Select Committee on tax credits, the TUC gave wholehearted support to the payment of the child credits to the mother, in full conscious recognition of the effects on its male members' take-home pay.



ANGELA PHILLIPS (JFL)

Janet Cox, (Bristol) putting the emergency motion on child benefits at the Labour Party Women's Conference on June 16. Angrily they called on the Government to bring in child benefits next April as planned.

be listened to more than boys. We can then not only rescue the girl from her difficulties but also make the future family more secure.

The speaker did declare himself to be against women being better at repetitive jobs, but went on to explain why we were by invoking psychological jargon. It seems we are less ego-identified than men, therefore better at menial jobs. Just as the working classes are better at roadsweeping than the aristocracy?

So next time you're changing the 759th nappy, packing biscuits or typing a letter for your boss, just console yourself with the fact that it's not boredom, frustration or desperation that you're feeling, you're just ego-identified elsewhere. □

Ruth Taylor

Overall Gain to Family

The Cabinet minutes reveal that Ministers were not confident of being able to "sell" the child benefit scheme by next April. Much was made of the loss to the man's pay packet. Assuming a child benefit of £2.64 (the minimum necessary if no family was to be worse off as a result of the loss of child tax allowances) the loss to a father of two would have been £3.17. In the Cabinet nothing seems to have been said of the gain to the mother — £3.78 in this case, which represents an overall gain to the family of 61p a week.

This was the minimum level acceptable; many groups, including ironically enough the Labour Party in their 1976 policy programme, were calling for a much higher allowance for the mother without any further loss to the father.

Stubborn Masculine Bias

The only good thing about the Government's sell-out is the anger it has caused and the wide-spread recognition of the importance of this issue to women. Barbara Castle has described the row over the government's decision as "the eruption of a growing anger at the stubborn masculine bias of British politics."

It is surely no coincidence that the only real fight to save child benefits came from the one woman in the Cabinet, Shirley Williams. It is crucial that women now fight to get the Government's decision reversed. We showed



our power through the family allowance campaign; we must show it again.

Several women's groups have already met with anti-poverty and one-parent family organisations and other groups to discuss a campaign. People are being urged to ask their local MPs to abstain when the Government brings in the regulations to pay a £1 family allowance to the first child.

Members of trade unions and political parties can put emergency resolutions to their annual conference. There will be a march at the TUC conference in Blackpool in September, and possibly a petition. The Child Poverty Action Group is helping coordinate the campaign and has produced a leaflet setting out the arguments in favour of child benefits. □

Ruth Lister

For further information contact Ruth at CPAG, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2 (01-242 6672).

BATTERED AND STABBED

Edith Bowen, aged 40, who'd been living in Stockport battered women's refuge for some time, was murdered on June 19.

She went out that Saturday evening, as there were women to babysit, and was found later lying in the car park of the Regency Club.

The police came and got her to an ambulance, but she died on the way to hospital of multiple stab wounds in the chest.

Her husband George Bowen is accused; he's being held at the Risley Remand Centre.

This murder has had little publicity — only local papers mentioned it, and they drew

no conclusions.

Women at the centre are under great stress — most are scared to go out now. They've had disturbances and obscene phone calls before, but never a death.

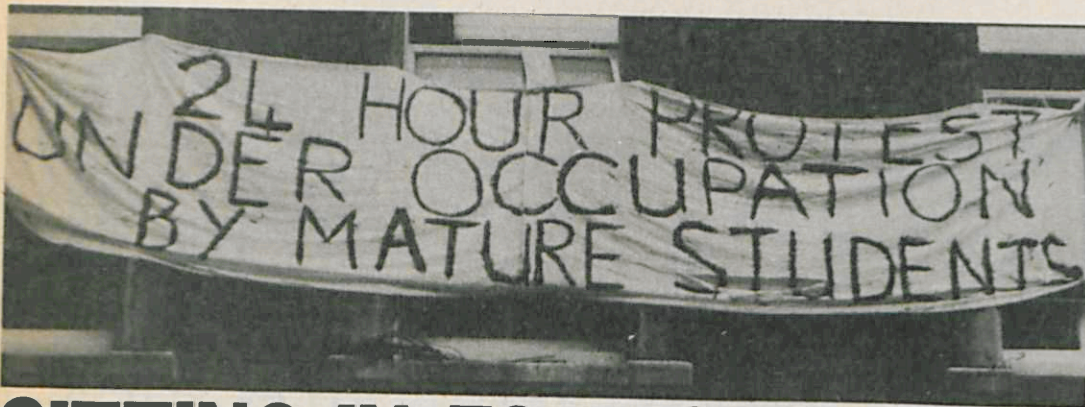
Edith Bowen had three children. They're still at the refuge but may have to be taken into care. □

WIVES LOVE IT

"There are a lot of women in this city who don't think they are properly loved unless their husbands treat them unkindly," solicitor Brian Haynes told Salford magistrates court.

The bakery worker he was defending admitted wounding his "common law wife" when she refused his demands for sex. He got six months.

STUDENT NEWS



SITTING IN FOR JOBS

"I gave up a well-paid job to train as a teacher. Now I can't find a teaching post and my old job is no longer open. The Government lied to us about opportunities in teaching."

"We have a double case against the cuts. We've got children of our own in the classrooms, and we're not going to get jobs ourselves."

Students in Dundee were the first to occupy their colleges in protest against teacher unemployment.

By May 20 all of Scotland's teacher training colleges had been taken over by the students, who started to organise their own alternative seminars and discussions.

Students at Southlands College, Wimbledon, were the first in England to occupy. In their teachers' charter they demand immediate implementation of union policy on reducing class size, jobs for all teachers and improved working conditions. The charter also includes several aims of the Working Women's Charter: nursery facilities for all

staff and students, and longer maternity leave.

In June well over 100 colleges were occupied.

Once more, women are and will be most affected by these cuts. At Southlands, for instance, there are 700 students and a female:male ratio of 7:1 — in the first week of June only about 35 had jobs lined up. This means larger classes, fewer resources and overworked staff, particularly in primary schools.

As well as women *teaching* in schools, there are secretaries, cooks, cleaners and other ancillary staff, many of whom are part-time — always the first to lose their jobs when there are cutbacks.

How did the women involved feel about these occupations?

LONDON

"My child is actually in a class of 36 and next year will be in a class even bigger," said Joy Dahl, Secretary of the Students Union at Rachel McMillan College where all the students are women with children.

She was one of over 50 women, plus some husbands and children, who occupied their college for 24 hours.

About 200 women attend the course there from 10am—

3pm for four years. Women in the fourth year were doing their final teaching practice during the sit-in, so couldn't join in. "Although two did manage to get here for the Friday evening — both with tales of no jobs," Joy said.

"People are really depressed," added a first year student, Ann Pierce. "I know at least one who is going to pack it in. She's 44 now and reckons that when she's qualified she won't be one who is chosen."

Another first year, grey-haired Grace Lally, is enjoying the course and going on with it. "They might change their minds again anyway," she said hopefully.

When the idea was first put, Grace Lally for one "thought it was crazy". When the switch-board was handed over by the office staff, who were very cooperative, Joy said, "We weren't quite sure what to do — who to let in, who not to — after all, we'd never done this sort of thing before."

The attitude of the academic staff was ambivalent. "We brought lectures to a halt for the day and this caused some aggro," Joy explained. But the staff did pass a resolution after the sit-in supporting action already taken.

Fuddy Duddy Old Women?

The women were exhilarated by their occupation. It had been a tremendous effort for women with families — some of them single parents who had Saturday jobs and other difficulties. They were aware of massive local support, from teachers, primary school heads, other unions and from parents.

"We rang the NUS and told them, and I just don't think they could believe their ears," Joy chuckled. "They seem to think we're a load of fuddy duddy old women who couldn't give a damn."

They are determined that the cuts must be reversed — several courses of action are being considered. A petition is to be taken to Downing Street soon and the women are going to write their own charter which they will take to local schools and workplaces.

Val Bassett

DUNDEE

In Tayside there'll be 103 jobs available for 431 student teachers when they graduate this summer. Primary teachers are hit hardest — 10 jobs for 222 students. About 80% of primary graduates are women.

Willie Hamilton MP brightly suggested that Scottish local authorities should consider sacking married women teachers — then their jobs could be given to single people!

Apart from being sexist and illegal, sacking women because they are married would only conceal unemployment. Students at Dundee College of Education angrily rejected the idea.

Their occupation lasted from May 14 to June 14. Dundee MPs Peter Doig and Gordon Wilson raised the question of teacher unemployment in



MEATWHISTLE—Youth Worker
(City Centre Theatre/Arts Project). Applications are invited for this vacancy from suitably qualified and experienced women. The person appointed will be interested in working alongside young people as they learn and explore theatre, drama and crafts. She will be particularly aware of the gradual changing position of women in society and able to support the girls and encourage them to realise their full potential in spite of the prejudices of those about them, and often their own view of themselves. Specific skills — in particular crafts are not essential. JNC Qualified Scale 1 — £2,442—£3,204 per annum. Plus £312 per annum for the 1976 Pay Award. For further information please write for application forms, and further details, from the Chief Education Officer (Ref. EE/E/CRC) Education Offices, PO Box 67, Leopold Street, Sheffield S1 1RJ, which should be returned without delay.

Parliament, and in early June deputations from the three teaching unions and from Tayside Regional Council met the Secretary of State, Bruce Millan, to ask for more money for education.

All Bruce Millan would offer was a "jobs package" for unemployed teachers — working in playgroups and mental hospitals, teaching English to immigrants and so on. But that would only take jobs away from other people — there should be jobs for teachers in schools and colleges.

The day the sit-in ended, Dundee students occupied Tayside House, the new Regional Council building which has stood empty since completion last year.

They'll support the students at Moray House who are staying in all summer, and may occupy again in October if no progress has been made.

Ingrid Muir

LIVERPOOL

In March, Liverpool City Council passed a budget which meant a £1 million cut in its spending on education. Cuts

Inside Rachel McMillan College, London, on the night of May 28



like this mean that there will be no probationary teachers employed in primary schools this year.

After three years of training students have to do a "probationary" year to complete their training certificate — the first year of teaching with a local authority. But last year, of 100 students leaving Ethel Wormald College, only about 10 got jobs.

"Many women have given up jobs to come to this college," said one student. "Pat was a nursery nurse before. Now she's done teacher training they won't take her back. Lots of people think about leaving — several left this year, their last year.

"Now the thought that there's no jobs ahead doesn't help you to struggle on. If you do stop, you're maybe asked for your grant back. And if you don't get your probationary year by the age of 47, you haven't got enough years for superannuation."

Occupying with Kids

Students from Ethel Wormald started a token occupation on May 24. They then agreed to continue and to boycott lectures for one day a week till the end of term.

Numbers staying overnight have been fairly small, because many of the students have children to look after. (At their interviews applicants are asked if they have "made arrangements" for their children. There is no nursery for students, just a creche which they organise themselves at half-term and in the holidays.) How did those who could stay feel about it?

"It's hard work — and no fun sleeping on the floor!"

"I get so tired. I've not been home for two weeks, except to fetch some clothes."

"It's fantastic — you get to know people more, and get to know yourself as well."

"One of the best things is knowing there are 100 colleges occupied over the country — that's the best feeling."

Other occupied colleges have provided babysitters, and over the Whit holiday several colleges organised playgroups for local children as well as their own. Many students said their husbands had been cooperative, coming in to stay the night or helping at home. One put the phone down and said, "That was my husband. He's leaving work early to pick up my daughter and says tea'll be ready for 5."

Student teachers joined the massive lobby outside Central Hall, Westminster on May 26, when the TUC met to decide on Healey's pay deal. Despite protests, the TUC accepted wage restraint and continued cuts.

Not a Special Case

The cooks and cleaners have been largely sympathetic.

"The first morning we were here the woman who does the tea asked if we had managed to get any breakfast. Then she gave us 50p towards it! And some of the coffee bar ladies wanted to come to our meetings."

Students decided to go leafletting and petitioning round shops, factories, schools and houses to get support. "It's important to say that we're not a special case. We want jobs for everyone."

In one morning, they collected 1,000 signatures on a petition against the cuts. Some of the kids they talked to laughed and said, "We'll come on strike with you — we hate school!"

There has been other activity on Merseyside — a demonstration to the Knowsley education offices, lobbies of Liverpool Council, a token

occupation of the Town Hall and many meetings with teachers, other students and trade unionists.

"We want teachers in the schools to stop covering up for the lack of teachers," said students at Ethel Wormald. "They don't seem to realise it's for their benefit too. Once they get a job, that's it."

(Ruth Martin, president of the Students Union at Southlands, said that although the NUT refused to support the 'no cover' policy, some teachers did — "About 35 schools are refusing to cover and they are getting new teachers taken on.")

Many students felt let down when their union, the NUS, called off the occupations on June 16. Liverpool students plan to continue to occupy one college, C.F. Mott, over the summer — holding seminars, meetings and playgroups there — and try to get things going again in the autumn. □

HEALTH NEWS

Who Profits From Private Abortion?

Women from all over England and abroad come to London as a last resort when they need an abortion. Who profits most? Jane Root investigates:

If you discover that you are pregnant and want an abortion, and if the local doctor is no help, you might end up phoning one of the many abortion referral agencies which advertise that they "give advice" and arrange abortions.

When I phoned the K Advisory Service, advertised in the *Evening Standard*, and said that I was thirteen weeks pregnant, a well-spoken woman told me that an abortion would cost £100—£150. She explained this extortionate sum by saying that thirteen weeks was "over the statutory limit". This is totally untrue — the last date for an abortion is the 24th week, and many are performed around the thirteenth.

The Pregnancy Advice Bureau, whose name appears in large black letters in the London telephone directory, told me that a thirteen week abortion would cost £200,

and that before the twelfth week they charged £150.

From the Pregnancy Advisory Service, who arrange around 30% of non-NHS abortions, I heard a different story. They charge £45 up to the twelfth week (when a one-day abortion can still be performed), or £65 up to the 18th week or if the woman has to stay overnight in the nursing home for other reasons. Very different from the Pregnancy Advice Bureau's £200 — and note the similarity of names.

What's Value for Money?

The Dept. of Health considers anything up to £100 acceptable to allow for varying standards of comfort in the nursing homes. But there's no way of telling what you'll get for your money. £150 spent at the K Advisory Service wouldn't get you a private room, colour television and a three inch pile on the carpets.

The Pregnancy Advisory Service help women who can't afford their rates. "One in seven or eight receive some kind of financial help," said their Information Director, Helen Grahame. The money comes from the nursing home PAS are linked with — it returns half the profits to

PAS funds.

"What we would like to see," Ms Grahame continued, "is the NHS providing an abortion for every woman who wants one. We don't want to see ourselves in business for ever." But meanwhile she is for a charitable rather than a profit-making service.

"Frankly some of the private agencies do make excessive profits. Last week I met a woman who had gone to a well-known private clinic. She was pretty sure from her dates that she was 10–11

weeks pregnant, and she was asked for £200."

It's often hard to tell exactly when you conceived. Some abortion agencies exploit this. At ten weeks you could be told you were thirteen weeks pregnant. Since most agencies operate a sliding scale of charges, rising sharply after the first eight weeks, this can be serious.

Good Counsel?

Getting unbiased advice when you're pregnant is difficult. It is doctors' prejudices that drive many women into the

PRICES QUOTED BY DIFFERENT AGENCIES

AGENCY	TIME (WEEKS)					
	up to 10	10–12	12–14	14–16	16–18	18–20
PREGNANCY ADVISORY SERVICE (charity) + £7.50 registration fee	day-care £45 overnight £65	£65	£65	£65	£65	referred outside
PAM TRUST + £10 fee	£75	£75	£85	£85	£100–£150	
PREGNANCY CONTROL CENTRE (charity)	£55	£55	£55	£80–100	£80–100	£200
K ADVISORY SERVICE	£80	£80–100	£80–100	£100–150	£200+	£200+
PREGNANCY ADVISE BUREAU	£150	£150	£200	£250	£250+	£250+

SECRET CLINIC

An outpatient abortion clinic at the Heath Hospital, Cardiff, has hardly been used since it opened in 1973. The anti-abortion Professor of Gynaecology won't use it for 'medical' reasons. The hospital even denies that the clinic exists.

For three years Cardiff Women's Action Group has been fighting for it to be used.

It's hard to get an NHS abortion in Cardiff. According to a June report *Abortion in Cardiff Now* produced by the Women's Action Group and the Women's Rights Committee for Wales, over half the women who had legal abortions in the last year for which figures are available had to get them outside the NHS and outside Wales.

The report compares Swansea (population 172,000) with Cardiff (pop. 274,000): in 1973 of the 480 legal

abortions recorded for Cardiff women, only 46% were done on the NHS — that year 525 abortions were recorded in Swansea, 93% on the NHS!

Many Cardiff women go to BPAS in Birmingham, often referred there by GPs. One said he felt he had to warn patients that it was quicker to go straight to BPAS than to try the Heath Hospital. But he doesn't like advising people to get private treatment.

Another report published that week by the FPA also found that GPs were dissatisfied with abortion facilities in Cardiff.

Local community health councils have been trying to get the Area Health Authority to do something about it. But many AHA members appear to be anti-abortion and object to the proposal that BPAS set up a clinic in Cardiff to do abortions on an agency basis paid for by the NHS.

With the Professor of Gynaecology and much of the AHA

against them, women in Cardiff will have to organise other ways of claiming their right to this service.□

Jane Hutt

Abortion in Cardiff Now is available from Jane Hutt, 32 Kelvin Rd, Cardiff.

RUN DOWN HOSPITAL

The maternity wing of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, London, was "temporarily" closed down on June 8.

Barbara Castle announced in February that the EGA, one of only three NHS hospitals run by women for women, would be closed. Staff and patients have resisted this, but the decision to close the maternity wing was made suddenly, without consulting them.

Four patients and some staff were transferred to Whittington Hospital, Highgate. Five patients were apparently very brusquely told to leave by the consultant who announced the decision.

What a Coincidence

The District Administrator claimed later that such immediate action had been necessary because three doctors in the maternity wing were due to go on holiday in July and another was leaving. He said the job was being advertised and promised that full services would be resumed by the end of July.

But the closure of the maternity wing is hardly an accident.

In February the lift mysteriously broke and wasn't repaired, putting the theatre on the top floor out of reach, so now only the two wards on the first floor are left open in the main building of the hospital.▷

NEWS

private sector in the first place. Most private referral agencies will just try to hussle them into making an appointment with *their* doctor.

Agencies aren't obliged to provide a counselling service. Ms Grahame of PAS said: "Counselling has always been part of our service, and we find it can sort out a lot of problems. A woman can discuss every aspect of her pregnancy before she decides whether she wants an abortion. Sometimes a husband or boyfriend is putting pressure on. Most women just want information, but about 2% are ambivalent. If someone decides she wants to keep her baby we tell her about all the help she can muster."

But Mr Austin of the PAM Trust told me: "Obviously most of our patients have abortions because they are unmarried and therefore not in a position to bring unwanted children into the world." An assumption many single mothers would challenge.

The Odd Gullible Girl

Next month for the first time a list will be issued licensing only certain agencies. This should put a lot of them out of business. The Pregnancy Advice Bureau, for instance, which quoted me £200 will probably not get a licence. But the law will be hard to enforce. As Dr Aspinall of the Pregnancy Control Centre said: "Their names will stay in the phone book and they'll get the odd gullible girl."

Most of those gulled will be foreigners with little grasp of the language and no time to shop around, who can be persuaded that the inflated prices are the going rate.

Charities won't be exempt from licensing, and many supposed charities are highly suspect. The *News of the World* revealed that the PAM Trust, which advertises as a "registered medical charity" and a "service to the community", wouldn't get a licence. Its directors — Birkin and Austin — are also directors of the Park Clinic, which lost its licence to perform abortions in 1974, probably because of allegations that the PAM Trust was steering £200,000's worth of business exclusively their way every year.

Many agencies are linked to clinics. Dr Aspinall, director of the Pregnancy Control Centre, and of the Raleigh Nursing Home, freely admitted that he had opened the agency and got it registered as a charity after PAS had refused to send patients to his new clinic.

"We've got to be business-like about it. There is no way to fund these clinics apart from the patients."

The Dept. of Health now checks all clinics performing abortions; they can lose their licences for the smallest infringement of the rules. Backstreet abortion is disappearing — the backstreets business has been transferred to the cheaper clinics. But why should we have to pay at all?□

CLASSIFIED CLASSIFIED

GROUPS

PIMLICO WOMEN'S GROUP, joint action and study, needs new members. Please contact Anne, 01-821 9510

Men and women interested in forming a non-sexist playgroup in the Barking/Romford area please contact Alison Goodman, 54 Linden St, Romford.

Women's group forming in Ealing/Acton area. Ring Pamela, 997 2372, Maggie 567 7493

Contact for Medway Women's group: June, 13 Mansel Drive, Borstal, Rochester, Kent. Medway 47579

EVENTS

Gay women meet every Wednesday 8pm at Centre, Broadley Terrace, NW1 for socialising and counselling

The Women's Free Arts Alliance is opening a new gallery for women artists. The opening exhibition is 'Images of Women' running from 1-22 September. Anyone who would like to submit work for selection for this exhibition should get it to the gallery between 26-31 July. Following exhibitions are: 'Sketchbooks, Workbooks and Visual Journals' from 6-27 Oct. (work to be sent in by 25 Aug.); 'Message through Image' — social/political art, from 24 Nov. to 15 Dec. (work to be submitted between 27 Sept. and 2 Oct.). Send SAE for details to the WFAA, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, London NW1 (01-935 1841).

PARIS PULLMAN Drayton Gardens, SW10
Tel: 01-373 5898

BRITISH PREMIERE RUN

"Spirited, witty comedy, played with zest and charm"

Anja Breien's

WIVES

Norwegian dialogue
English subtitles
in colour

LOCARNO FESTIVAL
Special Jury Mention

"Quite a landmark in feminist cinema" TIME OUT



PHOENIX
OPP. EAST FINCHLEY STATION 01-883 2233

SPREAD SPARE RIB AROUND

Help find new readers for *Spare Rib*. We'll supply free copies of old issues of *Spare Rib* (min 25 copies). You could put them in public places where people will read them, i.e. doctor, dentist and family planning waiting rooms, laundrettes, hospitals, common rooms.

Come and collect copies directly from the office — phone to check there's someone there before you come.

Alternatively, we'll send you copies, but, sadly, we have to ask you to pay the postage — 25 copies costs 85p for postage and packing.

Contact: Janie, *Spare Rib*, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS. (01) 437 2070.

WOMEN CLASSIFIED CLASSIFIED CLASSIFIED

AVAILABLE FROM CSE, 8 POLAND ST, LONDON W1



UNDER ATTACK

CONTENTS

Equality at Last?

The Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act: how they are avoided, how far can they go? The changing law, the participation of women into low paid jobs. Legislating for equality in the class.

Women in the Economy

Women's paid work, where it is concentrated, where it is being cut. The importance of the service sector. The results of employment policies: rising, though largely hidden, women's unemployment.

Part Timers

The increasing role of part-time women workers in overall employment. What it means to be a part-time woman worker. Their vulnerability — and the advantages to employers.

The Cuts Hit Home

Living well beyond from paid work now is especially devastating. Public service price rises and the dismantling of the welfare state both put more out of work and place more strain on family resources. The burden falls most heavily on women.

Economic Outlook

The policies the employers and the government are following have heavy costs for working people as a whole and women as workers and housewives in particular. Deviations between men and women can only further these policies.

Special Features

Women at Work 14
The Role of the Union 22
Working for Tomorrow 30

PERSONAL

Aggressive competent girlfriend sought by easy going single professional male. 33, London area. Box 490

Companion sought for trip through Canada, America. Leaving about September. I'm interested in working there also. (Male 23). Box 491

Woman psychotherapist (Jungian) Tel 01-348 5593 preferably before 10.00am

News tent left women's camp '73. Please contact J. Townsend, 15 Garre House, Bath

Feminist ASTROLOGER horoscopes and interpretation, SAE Lindsay, Trevaun, Tregaron, Dyfed.

"Cosmetic Surgery" For complete details and consultation, write 'phone or call The Raymond Young Clinic, 108 New Bond St, W.1. 01-629 6531

Male 28 seeks female for decent friendship. Please telephone 01-515 2473

Nationwide female only contacts, etc. Very discreet and understanding service. Send SAE to: "Ariadne", The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT

Festival Club, 2 Brydges Place, St Martin's Lane, WC2, welcomes women. Membership \$3.00. SAE for details.

GAY SWITCHBOARD 01-837 7324 (women volunteers for switchboard needed)

ACCOMMODATION

Women interested in sharing rented house in Nth London ring Terry 01-361 2788

CAMBRIDGE room wanted (in communal house preferably) from August/Sept. Box 492

HELP— Urgently needed for working artist-mother-lesbian, home workplace (due to son's age—8—lack of viable alternatives). At least two rooms plus kitchen—bathroom (use of, share?). Must be within travelling distance son's school, Notting Hill. Please leave messages, telephone no. at 01-727 1156.

Girl seeks room preferably Hornsey (N8) area. Prepared to pay reasonable rent. Box 493

Feminist postgrad. trainee-teacher seeks cheap shared accommodation in Bristol from October. Box 494

WORK

Resident part-time worker needed, fond of and experience with children. Minimal wages. Couple/child under four acceptable. £5 weekly, double room kitchen. Extra room available. Box 495

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE (parent controlled nursery initiated by Women's Liberation) needs full-time worker (male or female) with progressive ideas in pre-school education. Apply in writing to: Children's Community Centre, 123 Dartmouth Park Hill, London N19

PUBLICATIONS

THE GIRLS' GUIDE—1976 FOR GAY WOMEN. Annual pocket size international bar/club guide and complete directory. This third edition: 2000 listings/40 countries. \$2.00 only from, THE GIRLS' GUIDE, 1 North End Road, London W14 (mail order only—one week delivery). Also at: Sterling's Bookstore, 57 St Martin's Lane, WC2 and Symposium Bookstore, 12 Market St, Brighton

WIRES is the National Women's Liberation Information and Referral Service. Send all your information and queries to us and keep in touch with the movement by subscribing to the newsletter (twice monthly). Rates: Individual subs: £5 a year (£3 for poorer sisters); Group subs: £3 a quarter — 6 newsletters. £12 a year; Each additional newsletter: 50p for 3 months supply. Send cheques/POs and donations payable to WIRES c/o 30 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2. T: LDS 35561 (just ask for WIRES, it's a shared phone).

Women's Liberation Workshop. Women Information Newsletter Service. 38 Earlham St., London WC2. 01-836 6081. Open 12 to 10pm Mon to Sat.

Women's Small Press Book Club, Box 9279, Long Beach, California 90810, USA... Exciting new reading... send for free newsletter

WOMEN TOGETHER. New magazine from women in the Middlesex area. Send 17p to Women Together, 57 Wareham Rd, Harrow Weald.

COURSES

A CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR MARK. Women over 21 who could organise, manage and direct need not be held back by lack of qualifications. A two-year specially designed CNA certificate course is the answer. Entry by interview: mandatory grants. Send stamp for details to Secretary (SR), HILL-CROFT COLLEGE, Surbiton, Surrey. 01-399 2688.

BOOKSHOPS, SHOPS ETC

GOPSALL STREET POTTERY handmade earthenware. Every Saturday is open-day at our workshop. Watch us work. Buy our pots. Lots of parking. 26a Gopsall Street, London N1. Tel 01-739 9000.

ARE YOU A WITCH? Well, even if you're not, but have a serious interest in magic and the occult, then send for our catalogue of magical requisites. Catalogues 30p from Star Child, 147 Church St, Whitby, N. Yorks. Tel 4158

RIISING FREE left-wing bookshop have moved to 155 Drummond St, London NW1. Large selection of radical women's literature with mail order service.

If you want to join or start a group, find work, a travel companion, or a missing friend, start a household or share a house, have something to sell or swap... then run your own Classified Ad.

COPY DATE: August 18th for September 15th.

Please send a large stamped envelope with all replies to Box numbers.

Rates: 10p per word, 15p caps, £1.50 for semi-display (semi-boxed ad.), 50p for Box numbers.

Payment: Ads must be prepaid and sent to Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS. Please make all cheques and POs payable to Spare Ribs Ltd.

Conditions: Spare Rib reserves the right to refuse any classified ads.

☐ Tick if Box number required. ☐ Tick if Semi-Display required

I enclose £ for no. of issues

NAME

ADDRESS

Print your ad below in block capitals, one word in each box. Underline any words you require in caps.

7		
10		
13		
16		
19		
22		
25		
28		
31		
34		

Clothes change our view of the world and the world's view of us . . . The man has his hand free to seize his sword, the woman must use hers to keep the satins from slipping from her shoulders. The man looks the world full in the face, as if it were made for his uses and fashioned to his liking. The woman takes a sidelong glance at it, full of subtlety, even of suspicion. Had they both worn the same clothes, it is possible that their outlook might have been the same.

Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*

THE Why do men still dress differently from us? Lisa Tickner rummages through the centuries to find an answer.

ATTRACTION OF OPPOSITES?

When we dress babies in blue or pink, we identify them as male or female even to a casual observer, and invoke an 'appropriate' social response. Sex distinction in dress, which is really one of the most curious aspects of clothing, starts early and is taken absolutely for granted. Dress itself becomes an artificial, secondary sexual characteristic in virtually every culture.

It has been conventional in the West to consider the skirt a female garment, and trousers or breeches male, but there is no real anatomical justification for this. The Romans, who wore unfitted clothing loosely pinned and draped, introduced the death penalty for anyone caught wearing the 'barbarian' trews. Kaftans, sarongs and kilts, traditional Greek, Hungarian and Indian court costume, are examples of masculine 'skirts', whilst most harem women, whose chief attribute and function was their femininity, wore trousers.

Where trousers are the preserve of men, they become a symbol of masculine domination, and women who dare to wear them are considered not only presumptuous but also indecent. As recently as 1970 a High Court judge upbraided a witness for being 'improperly dressed in trousers', and they were banned from Ascot until later the same year. Society has finally relaxed its prejudice against trousered women, but

the distinction is not entirely forgotten. Trousers are still considered inappropriate for school-girls, air hostesses, barristers and many other female uniforms. At least women now have the choice, on most occasions, of trousers or a skirt — perhaps in reflection of our alleged ability to opt for a career or the traditional feminine role in marriage. A man wearing a skirt in public (unless it is a kilt) still invites arrest.

Elaborate sex distinctions in Western dress were dependent historically upon the development of fitted clothing around the end of the 14th century. Medieval men and women had both worn simple, loose, geometrically cut clothes like the staple tunic and cloak. Accessories and footwear remained undifferentiated. By the 15th century the complementary roles of male and female became more clearly expressed — and soon exaggerated. The broad shoulders of the ideal male were emphasised by his newly padded doublet, and his slim hips and slender legs by tightly fitted hose. Meanwhile the female body was subjected to the first of those restrictions, distortions and extensions which were radically and frequently to mask its natural shape for the next five hundred years. With her torso reshaped by pressure above, and distended by hoops below, woman became abstracted into a

pyramid which neatly reversed the upturned triangle of the male, counteracting his potentially active and dynamic shape with the most passive and stable of geometric solids.

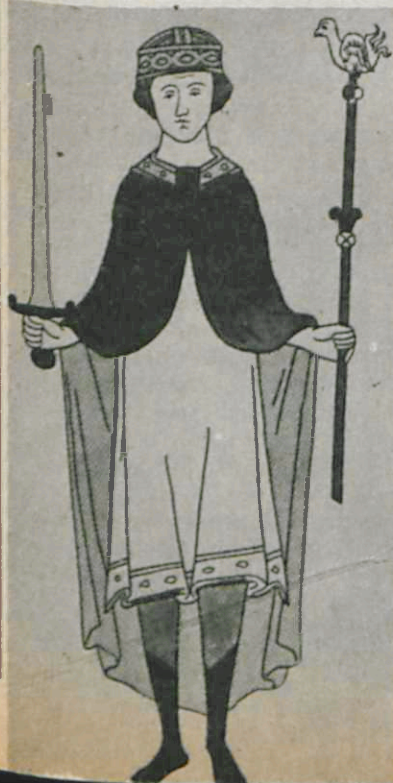
This led to three major but inter-related distinctions between male and female costume: the amount of encumbrance or of restraint; the way in which sexuality is expressed; and the degree of decorativeness considered appropriate to each sex.

When we look at the history of female fashion since the Middle Ages, we are faced with a series of shifts in silhouette, so violent and so artificial that it is difficult to understand how the human body could have provided the basis for each variation. The Elizabethan 'icon', elaborately surfaced but rigid in structure, seemed to produce a legless torso balanced on top of a drum. 18th century paniers, oval in section, kept a narrow profile but broadened the hips to an impossible width when seen from the front. The crinoline of the 1860s placed women literally in a metal or whalebone cage, and the bustle which followed grossly enlarged the buttocks. Accompanying corsets reduced the waist to a fashionable 18" or 19", and then developed an S bend which pushed the upper part of the body several inches out of line with the legs. The succeeding hobble skirt faded out with the First World War, and the 1920s appeared to inaugurate a period of greater naturalness and physical freedom — except that now the bust was abolished, by binding, as effectively as earlier periods had restricted the waist and hidden the legs.

For several hundred years, the prestigious study of the female nude in art followed quite a different ideal from that of the fashionably dressed; and in all this there was a very much more drastic interference with the basic shape of female, than with male anatomy. Women's fashions, although not always or necessarily more ornamental, far transcended masculine clothing in their tendency to severe restriction and enforced passivity. In whatever other ways the details of their dress might coincide, there was always this distinction: by keeping his legs free, the male preserved both symbolically and in practice his right to a mobile and active life. For the fashionable woman, beauty was dependent upon elaborate constriction, but the working

From William Rufus c.1086 to Deauville fashions 1924

SEEBERGER 1924



class woman was forced to compromise. She was in no financial position to compete with the extravagance of the upper classes, and her necessary employment, often 12 hours a day in the field, factory or mine, required a greater freedom than was possible with the crinoline, the bustle or the train.

Middle class leisure activities were made similarly difficult. During the 18th and 19th centuries women were corseted for their limited exercise, such as dancing, training in posture and graceful movement, and later even swimming. Gradually their sporting opportunities increased but the flexibility of their clothing did not. In the 1860s they played croquet in crinolines and in the 1870s entered the lawn tennis courts in tight and trailing skirts. Up until the mid-19th century, riding was almost the only sport of upper class women, but in a period when they were scarcely recognised as having legs at all, to ride astride would have been the ultimate indelicacy — and so the elegant but hopelessly inconvenient side saddle and the dangerously trailing skirts of the Victorian riding habit represented a specific concession to the social concept of female modesty.

The erotic overtones of historic costume are also very different in masculine and feminine dress. Male costume has at different times been exaggerated to enhance both muscular strength and phallic pride. Most men's jackets are still padded at the shoulders and many uniforms, military and otherwise, have ritualised this broad-shouldered and broad-chested ideal with braided epaulettes and frogging.

One of the most extraordinary fashionable accessories was the cod-piece. Originally a simple triangular gusset in the elaborately slashed and patterned 'stocks' of the Renaissance, it gradually assumed prominence, becoming rigidly padded into an abstraction of the erect penis. To quote Geoffrey Squire: *The entire male population of Europe above the age of three appeared to be suffering a severe epidemic of priapism.*

It was used as a pocket, a pincushion, and a handy point from which to hang the spectacles: homely adaptations of the embodiment of masculine virility and sexual pride. It became most exaggerated in mercenary costumes of the 15th and 16th centuries. Contemporary engravings show the coxcomb parading his manhood, the 'erection' decorated with jewels, feathers and ribbons, in a flaunting display for which there is no real female equivalent.

In contrast, the invention of décolletage towards the end of the Middle Ages, and seen by Laver as an essential principle of feminine fashion, is an artifice of passive display. The corset narrows the waist and thrusts the breasts upward, inviting sensual appreciation. But unlike the cod-piece not directly expressing erotic power.

Until recently, the female was more decorative than the male. This was not

In Tudor times giant proportions tended to denote wealth and status. But of course men never allowed their clothing to limit their mobility



AFTER ISAAC OLIVER 1603 (NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY)



ANONYMOUS c.1550

Riding sidesaddle was the only active pursuit considered seemly for ladies in the eighteenth century



GEORGE STUBBS 1793



THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH c.1750

In the nineteenth century the rich man could dress as if he actually worked provided that his wife looked as if she never did, and the maid had to cope with the housework in spite of her ridiculous clothes



CULVER PICTURES INC, NEW YORK 1861



LEECH, FROM PUNCH 1864

only accepted as normal but also assumed to be indicative of the psychological make-up of women. Rossetti's Jenny was:

... Fond of fun

And fond of dress and change and praise
So mere a woman in her ways.

But this 19th century view ignores the fact that until the end of the 18th century decorativeness had really been a distinction of class, and not of sex. Still, the idea of woman as the decorative sex dies hard, and like most stereotypes can be easily internalized. It has become positively a *duty* to manipulate the raw material of ourselves to fashionable advantage, making clothes and beauty one of the few areas of sanctioned feminine creativity. Curiously this seems to reverse the accepted convention that women are closer to nature than men. Simone de Beauvoir explains this in *The Second Sex*:

In woman dressed and adorned, nature is present but under restraint, by human will remoulded nearer to man's desire. A woman is rendered more desirable to the extent that nature is more highly developed in her and more rigorously confined.

This enforced femininity is carried beyond clothing to the more basic secondary sexual characteristics. Women are expected to shave their arms and legs and to eradicate even the faintest moustache on the upper lip because they are unacceptable reminders of body hair distribution which is strongest in the male. From the 18th century until relatively recently it was conventional for men to have much shorter head hair than women, who piled up their locks and lengthened their skirts in the Victorian period as a kind of ritual which symbolised their maturity.

Havelock Ellis suggested that:
one of the greatest of sex allurements would be lost if the two sexes were to dress alike.

J.C. Flugel gives one explanation for this in *The Psychology of Clothes*. Since there is no factor in the nature, habits or functions of the two sexes which necessitated any striking difference, the distinction must be due to a desire to accentuate sex differences themselves; on the double basis of a need to guard against the possibility of homosexuality whilst utilising every opportunity of heterosexual stimulation. If this phenomenon is indeed so deeply rooted, we cannot expect it to change except in conjunction with a shift in social and sexual values.

The psychoanalytical view may help us to understand why sex distinction in dress is such a universal phenomenon, but it does not explain the *nature* of the division. Why did the European male renounce his flamboyance at the end of the 18th century, adopting, in contrast to his wife, a drab austerity never before exhibited by the upper classes?

The change was historically related to the social upheaval of the French Revolution, when elaborate costume became closely identified with the

ancien régime. It became ideologically unsound, aesthetically unfashionable and even potentially dangerous to wear ornamental clothing. In reaction masculine dress became simpler and more uniform (and in principle more democratic); a change which was reinforced by the new bourgeois ideal of work. More time was spent in the Victorian counting-house, the workshop and the office rather than in the drawing-room or on the country estate. Manufacture, not land, was becoming the major source of wealth, but such social and political factors had little effect on women.

Thorstein Veblen points out that women in the 19th century did *not* break with the ideals of court aristocracy. Men may have adopted the bourgeois work ethic, but upper middle class women enjoyed a leisured existence as the social representatives of their husbands. They played no active part in the amassing of wealth under the new economy, having been separated by industrial developments from the manufacturing process. Their purpose was not to make money but to spend it, which gave them a role roughly parallel with that of the old style aristocracy, and they retained a similar elegance of dress, which proclaimed at the same time their ability to consume and their unfitness for productive work.

The Victorian period probably represents the high-water mark of sex distinction in dress. Looking at an 1860s photograph of Victoria and Albert, it is scarcely possible to believe that these two figures actually belong to the same species. In silhouette, hairstyle, fabric, colouring and accessories, they are visually differentiated from each other in every detail.

During the 20th century there has been some bridging of this gap. Tight lacing had been to some extent relaxed when the First World War abolished the elegant fettering hobble skirt, and engaged women in a variety of work they had never done before. As they became tram and ambulance drivers, worked in offices and factories, it was inevitable that their clothing should become more 'masculine', both for the sake of practicality, and as an expression of the job in hand. As workers they experienced an unprecedented self-confidence and their social role has never again been so passively ornamental as in the 19th century.

The short skirt and the straight waist of the 1920s were gestures of freedom — a celebration of the right of women to breathe properly and move freely — and the embodiment of a youthful ideal. The fashionably cropped head sacrificed a traditionally feminine source of attraction, in what was perhaps a symbolic denial of seduction in favour of sexual equality. The ideal shape of the 1930s was lithe, elegant and fluid, but a second change was provoked by World War II. The new ideal was disseminated through governmental propaganda posters and illustrations which showed tall women in authoritative or

working dress, or in square-shouldered (i.e. masculinised) suits, emphasising strong nerves and self control. Evacuation plans were put into effect, and nursery facilities provided for the remaining children.

It was probably inevitable that after the war there would be a fashionable reaction to the period of effort and austerity. The impact of Dior's 1947 New Look is well known, and despite the disapproval of Sir Stafford Cripps and the Government who considered it extravagant for a period of economic recovery, the style was an immediate international success. Nipped-in waists and long, defiantly full skirts contributed to an expression of self-conscious femininity. The new style continued with modifications into the following decade, at which point it paralleled the "back to the home" movement described by Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique*. The government produced more propaganda films, this time encouraging women *out* of the jobs they had been begged to fill in the war years, in order to make way for the careers and training schemes of the returning war heroes.

However, women often *were* still working — or began to in the 1960s particularly — in the service industries. The effect of trying to prove themselves as efficient as a man, whilst living with a convention of women as soft, pretty and domesticated, was often as schizophrenic for their wardrobes as it was for their emotions. In conventional films of this period the managing director who wants to see his secretary as a *real* (i.e. 'feminine') woman, takes off her glasses, unpins her bun, and whispers . . . "But Miss Jones — you're really very beautiful!" Working women were Cinderellas who turned into pumpkins at nine in the morning and reverted each evening to the ceremonial clothing of romantic and leisured beauty.

It was inevitable that in taking part in the 'real' world, in emerging from the isolation of the home, even if only briefly, into social, political and economic life, women would adopt items of male attire, not only as a reflection of their new roles, but also for purely utilitarian reasons. 1960s Unisex was nothing exactly new, but rather a continuing reaction against the exaggerated sexual distinctions of the Victorian period.

Yet women's clothes are still to a large extent divided into what Courrèges called *Tough Chic* and *Frou-Frou*. Despite the increasing respectability of women working, there has been no change in their clothing to parallel the dramatic alterations in masculine wear at the beginning of the 19th century, in what was, in so many ways, a comparable situation.□

This is the third in a series of articles. The first two appeared in SR 45 and 47. The last one, on the Dress Reform Movement — the first conscious attempt by women to create a fashion for themselves — will appear in the October issue, SR 51.

Only One Life

"Emotional is a word that is used to put down people, particularly women" — *Jo Ryan* describes the gestalt therapy method used by her self help group to express and recognise their feelings, when our society "depends on people *not* feeling anger and pain at the conditions they are forced to live and work under . . ."

Why do therapy? Isn't a good cry or a talk with a friend just as effective? Isn't it self-indulgent? Why uncover all those nasty feelings, if you get by most of the time? Doesn't it create an artificial situation, leaving all your "real life" problems unchanged? Can we change that much anyhow?

Such criticisms are often thrown at me about "doing therapy" — and many more as well. Here I want to convey something of why therapy is important to me, what kinds of processes it involves, and what the contradictions are. I have found writing about therapy difficult and rather limited. Therapy is concerned with the immediate experiencing of yourself and others, and with the direct expression of emotion. It allows you to feel what you cannot "normally" feel. It is not concerned with argument or justification. Descriptions of what goes on tend to sound a bit trite, e.g. "you have to learn to accept love" or else a bit melodramatic, e.g. "I killed my mother today."

It's become yet another radical platitude to say that therapy is concerned with change and not with cure or adjustment. The word "therapy" with its connotations of healing certainly is misleading, but we haven't yet found a better one. For me, therapy isn't only a rescue operation when life has become impossible, nor even the means of preventing myself reaching that point. It's not that I haven't needed such help in various crises. However, I also see therapy as part of a whole approach to changing my life, to struggling for better relationships with people, to demystifying my needs.

Power of our pasts

Like many other people who were influenced by the Student Movement and the Women's Movement, I have spent the last few years trying (amongst other things) to work out different ways of living. We criticised sexism, competitiveness, romantic love, possessiveness, authoritarianism, elitism and so on. We recognised how such emotions and attitudes arose within the repressive structures of the nuclear family, with its role within capitalism. People started to live communally, altering sex roles and socialising children differently.

Consciousness raising was another way in which people tried to change, transforming individual misery into a shared struggle. Many women revolutionised their lives by living or working only with women, independently of men. Yet it has also become clear how very difficult it is for people's feelings and relationships to change, even with a radical restructuring of domestic life. It also became clearer how repressive some of these attempts to change were. After all if you are not supposed to be dependent on men any more, how can you allow yourself to feel pain at being rejected by one?

Some of the reasons why it is difficult to change are due to the present nature of our society, to the different relationships that men, women and children have to production, to existing power relations. But some are due to the depth of our past socialisation in the family and its perpetuation in our present relationships. It is easy, especially in a time of radical changes, to underestimate the power of our pasts. But by freeing ourselves from the control of our early socialisation we can better confront and change the present. Therapy is one of the ways we can get the power to do this.

Here I am concerned with Gestalt therapy; particularly how it can be used by people outside the usual institutions — commercial growth centres, professional groups, or mental hospitals. At the moment therapy of all kinds seems to be on the increase. So-called "growth" centres have sprung up offering a variety of new approaches to personal change — gestalt, encounter, bio-energetics, massage, psychodrama, transactional analysis, co-counselling, to mention only the most common. These centres are contradictory so far as feminists and socialists are concerned. They see society as only composed of individuals, and personal liberation as possible without the necessity for social change. They would dismiss any arguments about the power of sexist structures as "head-trips" that meant we were over-intellectualising and avoiding the feelings involved. This is because they can only see your feelings of sexual vulnerability in front of men, for example, as your personal hang-up

related to your particular experience. They do not recognise the social sources of sexism, nor how sexist structures carry over into a group, whatever therapy you do. If you object to a particularly sexist exercise or assumption of theirs, they tell you to do therapy on why you object. They have no understanding of how people's emotions are determined by their sex, class or race, by their material positions. They charge high fees for groups — though not as exorbitant as private psychoanalysis.

On the other hand, their therapy methods are not coercive or suppressive in the way that drugs are, nor are they so concerned with adjustment to oppressive conditions as is most conventional psychiatry. In what follows I shall try to describe how one self help therapy group used these methods for its own ends.

My self help group started off as mixed, but now we have both single sex and mixed meetings. We split initially because some of the women were unable to work on their sexuality in front of men. It's difficult enough anyhow to get into feelings of self-disgust and sexual shame, but I found it quite impossible when I was wondering at the same time whether the men fancied me or not. Some women couldn't find the space to explore their relationships with women because the heterosexual relationships continued to dominate them, as in "real life". Others felt disloyal letting out very negative feelings about women in front of men. The men were scared of exposing their sexist feelings in exploring their sexuality, for fear of criticism from the women.

Another advantage of having an all women's group is that you can do consciousness raising in combination with therapy. This reduces the danger — ever-present in therapy — that you end up feeling quite unique, locked into your private history.

It's possible to work on sexism in a mixed group. For example, people usually learn a lot from setting up situations that reverse the normal power relations, e.g. with the women lining up the men, choosing them, dominating them, and discovering what it feels like. But today, given the state of relations between the sexes and our needs to change it, I think separate groups are necessary as well.

Directly expressing feelings
Gestalt therapy is a way of working I



Above and below: "working" with a pillow in a self help therapy group.

have found continuously helpful. Gestalt methods can relatively easily be adopted by self help groups without leaders; they are flexible, open to invention, and don't involve as much technical understanding as some other therapies. There is no single or central technique in Gestalt, but one common procedure is for you to talk or act directly towards a cushion (any other soft object would do), as if the cushion were a specific person in your life, or maybe one part of you. I'll try to show how this works by describing an experience of mine in a women's self help therapy group.

When I arrived I was feeling tense, irritable, bitching at people, not quite knowing what I was angry about, hating myself. I said that I would like to do something about this, and after some discussion of how the evening was to proceed — what the others were feeling like, who else wanted to work on something specific — I started. This is very different from growth centre groups where either the leader decides what is to happen, or else people just compete for individual working time, with the most confident or assertive winning.

I began by saying I felt generally angry and I went through several of the things that had happened in the past few days — frustration at thwarted plans, being unable to write, seeing a past boy-friend, tension at home. Since I didn't know what to focus on, I just let myself feel my anger, allowing it to develop. I did this (at the group's suggestion) by saying and then shouting to a cushion "I'm angry, I'm angry." I also began hitting it with another cushion, making whatever noises I felt like — grunts, shrieks, etc. Hitting, with your arms brought right back over your head, and taking a really good swipe, is an expression of anger that as a woman you are not usually allowed. It opens up your breathing and develops the feeling. My words then changed into "I hate you, I hate you." Such changes in the conscious context of your feelings happen as you let the feelings surface and wander around —

something you normally prevent yourself from doing.

I realised that my words were directed at my past boy-friend. So it was suggested that I use the cushion as him, and address it directly as "you", rather than talk about "him". This isn't as difficult or as ridiculous as it sounds once you've done it a few times. I hurled accusations, criticisms, insults at him, much as I used to in our rows together. The difference doing it with a cushion is that I didn't have to listen to his counter arguments and defend myself, nor was my anger modified by any immediate sense of my dependency on him, as it used to be in "real life". After some time the others suggested that I stop shouting at him, and let myself feel any other feelings I had for him at that moment.

I began to feel weak, confused, a bit humiliated, wondering why on earth he still wanted to come and see me (we had stopped living together several years ago). At this point I got a few images of my mother, and I could have gone on to work on her; the ways in which she used to make me feel weak and confused. But I also had a lot of energy for continuing with X. There was quite a pressing problem with him that I wanted to sort out, so I chose not to go back into family sources, (though I have done this on other occasions). In any actual row with X, I would have been too guarded to let myself feel weak, and I certainly couldn't have admitted my feelings to him. But in the therapy I did tell him how I felt, spelling out in detail what got at me, the particular incidents, the exact kinds of controlling behaviour.

Messages received

Next, I switched roles — I sat on the X cushion, pretending to be him talking to me (another cushion). This allowed me to explore how I thought he felt about me, how I thought I came across to him. It doesn't matter how "true" this is. You might get the person entirely wrong. What is important at this point is your idea of what is going on, what messages you are allowing yourself to receive from the other person, what messages you are blocking. I had him say how much he wanted to see me and fuck with me. In any actual rows we had he would never have said this, either because I was so busy accusing him of not wanting me enough, or else because I was putting him down as best I could. Even when he did say positive things I never really believed him because I was so focussed on what I wasn't getting from him. Acting him saying something positive allowed me to take it in, and also to realise his vulnerabilities and needs for me. It also showed me how much I had construed myself purely as the victim of his rejection, when in

fact I was also actively rejecting him and refusing his affection.

I then "changed back" into myself, and allowed my feelings for him to develop. Not surprisingly I started to feel affectionate and sexual, but then confused as to whether I wanted to see him or not. This confusion was similar to the ambivalent relationship we had, with very strong negative and positive feelings all mixed up. Someone in the group then suggested that I put the nasty side of X on one cushion, and the nice side on another, and talk to them separately. Externalising the conflicting feelings in this way allows you to define the features of the conflict more clearly. You can also go further into what the conflict means to you, rather than just being confused and divided, and trying to hold things together. The hardest part for me was talking to the nice X — for whom I had chosen an extremely small cushion compared to the nasty X cushion. A lot of the positive things were to do with sex, and this made me aware of how compelled I still felt by his sexual acceptance and enjoyment of me. With a great effort I did manage to tell the nice X all the things I liked about him — something I had never really done before. This was quite a breakthrough for me.

The present situation was that despite breaking up such a long time ago, we had continued to sleep with each other occasionally. At first I had really wanted to do this, but recently I had become increasingly uncomfortable about it yet unable to say no to it. In fact that day I had said I didn't want to go on, but because of my uncertainty I hadn't said it clearly enough — he took it as meaning only for that particular day, not indefinitely which is what I had meant. Doing therapy it became clear that I couldn't admit or feel the ways in which he was still important to me, pretending that we just slept with each other "for old times sake". The group suggested that this time I really say goodbye to X, and to the nice parts particularly. I found this extremely difficult — I kept fantasising future situations where we would meet each



other again — but experienced a great relief when I had done it. This was quite a resolution for me. It was also salutary to realise the extent to which I hadn't fully let go the past relationship, and helpful to try to do so.

Doing therapy without confronting the actual person is often criticised for being artificial and not helpful for sorting things out in real life, whatever that is. I have never found this — it can be difficult to get going with a cushion, but it would usually be impossible with the actual person. Once you start to express some feelings towards the cushion-person it becomes quite real, and the strength of the emotions evoked is often amazing. It is clearly a limitation on most relationships that there are so many feelings that are not directly expressed. Doing therapy gives you the necessary space to learn how to do this better, and this carries over into "real life".

Finding anger

Therapy methods can and frequently are used for working out ongoing relationships, with the people involved participating. Once you have some experience you don't actually need to go to a group. You can do it at home, if you have the necessary space and uninterrupted time (this is very important). It's best however to have a couple of people not so directly involved in the relationship to play the supporting and facilitative roles. It's very different from having a row or trying to sort things out by talking (though these are important in other ways). Rows often consist of accusations, justifications, insults and arguments. Essentially the two people are listening to each other, trying to wound whilst defending themselves against what the other person is saying. If really wild allegations come out they are usually put down as "crazy".

One therapy method is to get the two people involved to shout at each other all the crazy irrational things they can think of, as well as the apparently more objective ones. It is best to do this without listening to what the other is saying, and certainly without replying or defending yourself. Usually the two people need a lot of encouragement from the others to keep it up. Generally we filter out the crazier aspects of our anger at someone, but load a lot of it onto apparently justified resentments that we can admit to, and then we have unproductive arguments about these. It is often quite frightening letting out all this anger with people that you care about and depend upon; it is important that there is agreement on both sides to do it, so that one person is not just using the occasion to bully the other in some way. Each person may need time afterwards to work individually on what came up for them in this process —

what it has left them feeling. You usually end up with a much clearer sense of what you are projecting onto someone, where that anger comes from, and what are the specific differences of need and interest between you. It is then much easier to sort out conflicts about, e.g. the amount of attention you pay each other, the housework.

We have also found that to some extent women and men have different needs in therapy because of their different socialisations and roles. Many women find their anger in therapy for the first time. We are typically brought up to suppress our anger, to be pleasing and accommodating. Instead of getting angry we tend to get upset, or turn the anger against ourselves and get depressed. It's no accident, although I didn't intend it, that most of the examples I have used here are about anger. We can gain a lot of strength and energy from finding and expressing our anger, and also greater clarity about what we *do* want. Anger means the end of passive acceptance and self-destruction. By contrast it is more important for men — some at any rate — to discover their weak sides, to learn to cry and let themselves feel dependent. This may actually lead to an initial loss of confidence in doing the things that men usually do more readily than women, e.g. speaking in public, organising other people.

I hope that the examples I have given show how Gestalt methods can be appropriated and adopted from professional therapists, for use by self help groups or in the course of everyday life. Obviously the variety of techniques and methods is much much greater than I have been able to indicate here. There are now several good books to consult for this. It's important not to mystify the methods, which the authority of professional therapists tends to do. But experience and confidence are important too, in learning to play the therapist role. You learn when people have sufficiently expressed one emotion to move onto the next, you come to tolerate the very strong and basic emotions that people show, without getting freaked out yourself, or without blocking the emotion by reassurance (which is what we usually do in everyday life). It's important that we share these skills around and don't allow them to be the property of only one person (the therapist, who is never also the therapist), or only one institution (the professional group, the hospital, the commercial growth centre). We have to use them for our ends, not theirs.

Growth and change

I said at the beginning that therapy for me was about trying to change, to be less controlled by my socialisation, to have better relationships. "Growth" has



quite rightly got a bad name, from the phoney and individualistic nature of much of the growth movement. There, growth seems to mean becoming a "beautiful" person — joyous, creative, self-confident, with no hang-ups.

What therapy does do is give you a sense of your life as a process, rather than as relatively fixed, determined by a mixture of your personality and your social roles. Capitalist ideology, in the form of psychology, perpetuates certain myths that lead people to take a fatalistic attitude towards themselves, thus restricting their possibilities for change. Thus it is an assumption of most psychologists that by adulthood we have fixed personalities, and that only minor adjustments are possible. If people have fixed personalities, that means that they are predictable, reliable and controllable. We also tend to think of ourselves as being a certain type of person — aggressive, shy, demanding, etc. — and we deny other more suppressed parts of ourselves.

Children's patterns of emotional expression are much more varied than are those of adults — they are more intense, more extreme, more changeable than we are. Part of socialisation in our society consists in reducing this richness to something much more one-dimensional, much more controlled and restricted. The expression of strong emotion is often taken as a sign that the person in question is "disturbed" — when what is usually happening is that they are disturbing others. "Emotional" is a word that is used to put down people, particularly women. Capitalism depends on people *not* feeling anger and pain at the conditions they are forced to live and work under. Therapy can develop the great range of feeling that most people are capable of. It shows the crippling limitations in most of our lives and in doing so it challenges these limitations.

We have only one life. □

Next month Jo Ryan describes bio-energetics, the therapeutic method that her self help group uses in conjunction with Gestalt therapy.

Further reading:

Getting Clear by A.K. Rush, Wildwood House, £1.95.

Gestalt Therapy Verbatim by F. Perls, Corgi Books.

reviews

ART

FEMINISTO

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman

At the beginning of 1975 a group of women gradually started sending each other small art-works through the post. The originators, Kate Walker and Sally Gollop, involved their friends and this core has extended to cover people all over the Midlands and South of England. The aims of sending art-works to each other are to develop a visual language that is accessible to women in that it corresponds with their own experiences, and to break down our isolation. Often we learn to understand ourselves by making visible in some form aspects of our lives — our process of selection often leads to self-discovery. Each person replies to the art-work she has received by making either an image/object that reflects something of her perspective on life, or that responds directly to the image she has received. Of course work has to be small to be posted, but small scale has an added dimension. Women's lifestyles tend to contain small time-scales, brief moments — we need flexibility to deal with the tiny important moments that children, friends, lovers, present. This is often reflected in the work. And we are so busy with children, jobs, domestic life that time for art-work has to be slotted in between tea and the ironing or whatever.

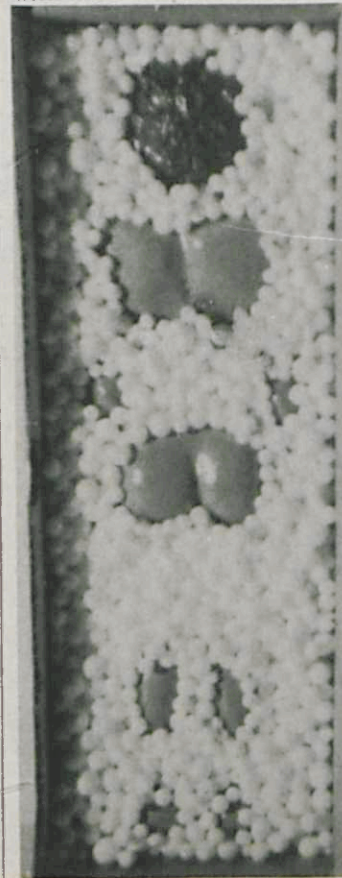
This search for images to do with being a woman is, for many of us, an attempt to find a feminist perspective and to put art into a directly political sphere. We are trying, I think, to unite apparently disparate aspects — the private, domestic and personal with political and social understanding.

We have few physical resources which is reflected in the art-works; many of them use old packaging, clothing; we recycle lots of things. Ecological bunch! We use the skills we already have — "female", "domestic" skills — crochet, knitting, sewing as well as the more traditional "arty" skills. Not all of us are artists. We have neither the

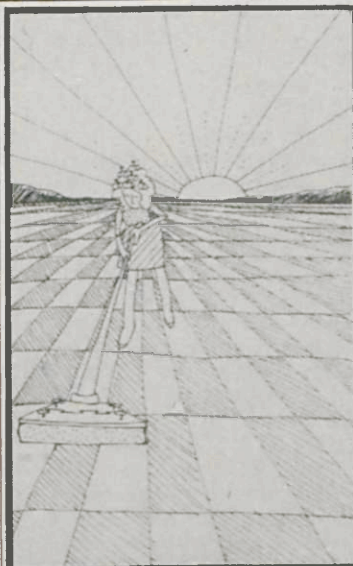
time, resources, nor I think the inclination to use the complex technology which has become an integral part of the established art scene. Our reasons being that mystification in art has already made it nearly impossible for all but a few to work in art and design fields without a sense of inferiority. Also since this postal event is about communication we don't want to alienate the women we are hoping to involve. Most of us after all had a non-technical education. We ended up on the "domestic science" scale not the "pure science" one.

Our isolation is broken by recognising images that are instantly knowable as to do with women. Images are reiterated in different people's work, images and ideas aren't private property. The strain of being creative is removed from the individual and begins to become a bit more collective.

Some of the things that have been made and sent fall into rough groups. There are things on food — boxes of chocs using parts of woman as the sweets, a plate of salad with the meat on the lettuce



Bubble Bath Suicide by Lyn Austin in Feministo postal event



A Woman's Work is Never Done by Penny Booth in Feministo postal event

a little woman. Some work on childbirth and our ambiguous relationship with our children. Many images indicating the use of the female by the press and advertising world. Works expressing suffocation and isolation in a personal life.

We hope that people who go to see the exhibition of the postal event will feel free to respond to the images by joining in. Our notion of visual contact as a network of relationships is one we would like to see extending very widely.

To coin a well-known phrase "this is what you do":

1. Get excited at the idea of a postal visual communication event.
2. Write to Phil Goodall, 14 Valentine Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham 14, who will send you a list of people already started into this.
3. Pick a name.
4. Make an image, knitted picture, spaghetti sculpture, embroidered poem, what you will.
5. Pack it with a note, post it: please don't forget the stamp.
6. Soon you'll get a reply in the form of another piece of work, which will be the start of your collection.

Now there is the beginning of a dialogue — two people have got some clues about each other.

Phil Goodall

Birmingham: August 4-27, The Readers Lounge, Central Library, Paradise Circus, Birmingham 3.
Liverpool: October 4-18, The Academy Gallery, Renshaw Street.

COOPERATIVA BEATO ANGELICO

Women's art explosion in Italy

"MAGMA is an explosive mixture beneath the crust of the earth, always ready to burst into flames; the situation of women is also a magma, a violent force which is breaking out everywhere through the crust of passivity." And MAGMA is the name of a large travelling exhibition of women's art, part of a creative outburst which over the past two years has reached beyond the main centres into all the regions of Italy.*

The first women's gallery opened this April in Rome. It is run by the Cooperativa Beato Angelico, a group of 11 women — some artists, others not; some long term feminists, others new to the movement. The Cooperativa chose for their opening exhibition a picture by Artemisia Gentileschi, the 17th century artist whose life and work were an archetypal struggle with the male world. Her painting, "Aurora", had as recently as 1970 been attributed to a male artist by an expert on the period (also male). Then Eva Menzio, one of the Cooperativa, found a contemporary description by Baldinucci proving that "Aurora" was without a doubt by Gentileschi. So this exhibition not only allowed us to celebrate an undervalued artist, but made a neat point about male culture and its inability even accurately to record women's achievements.

Gentileschi's "Aurora" is her usual strong female figure, almost a self portrait, which repelled so many later critics. Characteristically she uses a close-up technique with the background out of focus, showing the Dawn as a figure actively struggling to push back the darkness.

An 18th century collector painted a modest veil over the front of the nude — a reminder of the way values and taste in art change which is one reason why Gentileschi's work has been almost forgotten.

Eva Menzio's full bibliography of Gentileschi accompanied the exhibition, reproducing all her known paintings and letters, and briefly relating the details of her



Aurora by Artemesia Gentileschi. Dawn, the artist's usual strong female figure, actively struggling to push back the darkness.

amazing life.

The daughter of an established painter, she was born into the artist Caravaggio's circle where homosexuality was accepted and painters were often in conflict with the law. Like many other experimental subcultures, this one was brutally traditional in its treatment of women. In her teens Gentileschi was raped by Tassi, a painter friend of her father's. At the subsequent trial her evidence was tried by torture but she maintained her charges. Tassi was jailed briefly — it was his third rape — and he remained a successful painter and good friend of Artemesia's father.

Artemesia was married off as quickly as possible to another painter who was also implicated in the rape. She left him quite early and became completely self-supporting. She had several lovers and daughters (some became painters) and worked all over Italy as well as in England.

Her work deals with scenes of sexual antagonism; she returned again and again to subjects like Susanna and The Elders, the Rape of Lucretia and especially to Judith beheading Holofernes. In the Judith pictures, Gentileschi produced an image of woman as avenger, both beautiful and savage — part of the underground mythology of feminism which still sets us wavering between fear and identification.

Most of Gentileschi's letters deal with questions of work and technique, rightly restoring emphasis to her ability as a painter since she has so often been recognised only as a "personality". The process of reduction began immediately after her death; this epitaph shows how Gentileschi's active artistic and sexual life were

resented — and equated:

D'Artemesia Gentilesca
Co'l dipinger la faccia a questo,
es a quello
Nel mondo m'acquistai mesto
infinito;
Ne l'intagliai le corne a mio
marito
Lascia il pennello, e presi lo
scalpello.

from Artemesia Gentileschi
By painting one face after
another
I made myself a great name in
the world;
I sculpted horns on my
husband's head
When I laid down the paint-
brush and took up the tool.

By selling the Gentileschi bibliography, the Cooperativa raised money for future exhibitions while making their own contribution to women's studies. They hope that the gallery will become a meeting place for women from local groups, other artists' cooperatives and schools. Their work of documenting the work of past women artists will continue, but the next exhibitions will be by members of the cooperative: Suzanne Santoro and Carla Accardi.

Italy is unique in the number of established women artists who were early on committed to feminism, whereas similarly influential women in England and the USA have often been openly hostile to the movement, or used its ideas to further their own careers. It's impossible to separate the women's art explosion from the general situation in Italy where 50,000 marched for abortion, and their rights in April, where abortion is expected to topple the government. Women are gaining power in all areas of life; this shows in their painting, the way they dress and in every aspect of the culture.

Amanda Sebestyen

*Studio International, Jan/Feb 1976, gives a description of the Italian art scene and the growth of feminism within it. It includes reproduction of work from MAGMA and by members of the Cooperativa Beato Angelico.

T.V.

MARTI CAINE

Marti Caine comes from Yorkshire, is 31, has two kids and is about to break into the national big-time with a nine-part television series of her own. Last year she had the dubious honour of winning Hughie Green's programme, 'New Faces' in which showbiz talent from all over the country competes in a knock-out

contest and the winners are established from the viewers' votes sent in by postcard. It's a curiously old-fashioned programme, full of showbiz patronage and nervous friends who are put at their ease as they introduce the talented contestants. I find programmes like this exert a magnetic fascination, because on an obviously low budget they try to maintain all the shining glamorous mystique of Entertainment, and fail dismally every time. They continually validate the most mediocre qualities of popular entertainment — Marti Caine and her victory were an exception.

She's had 15 years of working northern clubland, and has developed an immaculate timing as she tells a stream of absurdist jokes, many of which are directed against herself — she's thin and far from the conformist image of curvaceous sex object. Ironically, though, she fits the high fashion image — rangy, a fine large-featured face framed in soft, fluffy hair, a tall peg for flowing clothes. Her jokes not only show up her failure to be a little glamour pot, but also to be a good little housewife; it's mildly subversive humour which affectionately pokes fun at various female stereotypes. But the subversive element is given an ambivalent aura by Marti's own counter-glamorous glamour appearance, and it remains to be seen whether the TV series allows her to develop a real female absurdism (a female John Cleese?) or whether it absorbs her into its televariety format. On the basis of the first programme, co-option appears to be the winner, but she is worth watching — just in case.

Micheline Wandor

Marti Caine, ATV, Saturdays until August 28.

BOOKS

EVESONG

by Maureen Duffy
(Sappho Publications,
39 Wardour Street,
London W1, £1.10 +
15p p&p)

Maureen Duffy is well known for her novels, and for the part she has played in the Writers Action Group, who have struggled for years for public lending rights. This, her third book of poetry, celebrates love for women, disentangling the powerful feelings between lover and love object.

Maureen Duffy writes both of the pain of being a lesbian

in our society which does not value women living without men, and also of the splendour which love even in our society can be. One poem which tackles this theme and thereby exemplifies the contradictions that I find in Duffy's poetry is 'Pornopack'. The subject of the poem, contemplating a pack of postcards depicting common male fantasies of lesbian lovemaking says: "They would have me believe the poised, paid dolls/under the infra lamp are us." In order to combat these ideas around lesbianism she asserts by contrast: "I answer we have been there where gilded lilies/are sewn symbols of innocence/... and saint and angel climb together the body's ladder/of perfection." I felt, however, that these images reflect the values of the society whose definition of lesbianism she is rejecting. Either you're dirty, or you're holy; and if you speak from the latter position then you end up justifying the sexual instinct only by overvaluing the love object, which ends in claustrophobic romanticism. The other side of this contradiction is the way in which Duffy is then forced into speaking of herself. Often she describes the force of her feelings by using images easily associated with traditional ideas of masculinity, objectifying herself as aggressive vis a vis her lover's passivity. For example, in 'Pasiphae': "I have been/a bull in a porcelain shop trampling china roses/harsh and fierce when I should be kind."

This may be connected to the fact that situations are seen as very private, emotions being spoken through images of a house, a room, a bed, a bath. Connections are not made between feelings and the wider social context in which they occur. And the impression of privacy was deepened for me because I couldn't always understand the references in some of the poems. The images on which the ideas hinge are often taken from classical myth or figures in European literature which I wasn't familiar with. I think that brief notes would have been helpful for some of these poems. What is tremendously moving about these poems is their frankness — Maureen Duffy's willingness to make herself so vulnerable, about her feelings, about her lesbianism. As far as I know, there is little lesbian poetry published in this country; this book is a welcome and thought-provoking start.

Michele Roberts



BOOKS for children

MIRABELLE'S SECRET
by Griselda Gifford
(Gollancz, £2.30)

There are very few good children's books for the middle age range (8-10s) let alone good non-sexist ones, but Griselda Gifford's *Mirabelle's Secret* is a refreshing exception. This is the second book about Jenny who featured in her excellent *Jenny and the Sheep Thieves* (Gollancz, 1974). In the first 'Jenny' book, Gifford portrayed a courageous and independent girl, non sex-stereotyped adult relationships and an unpatronising view of working class characters. The book also had perceptive writing about the preoccupations and point of view of a primary school age child.

Mirabelle's Secret displays the same virtues. Jenny, in hospital to have her tonsils out, becomes firm friends with Mirabelle (of West Indian origin). They leave hospital without managing to exchange addresses and the book is taken up with Jenny's search to be reunited with her friend whose 'secret' she longs to discover. Girls in children's books are so rarely shown in friendly relationships, working and playing together, so Jenny's determination to cement her friendship with Mirabelle makes a very welcome exception to this rule.

Both child patients and hospital staff are from a variety of cultural backgrounds and place the book firmly in multi-ethnic Britain.

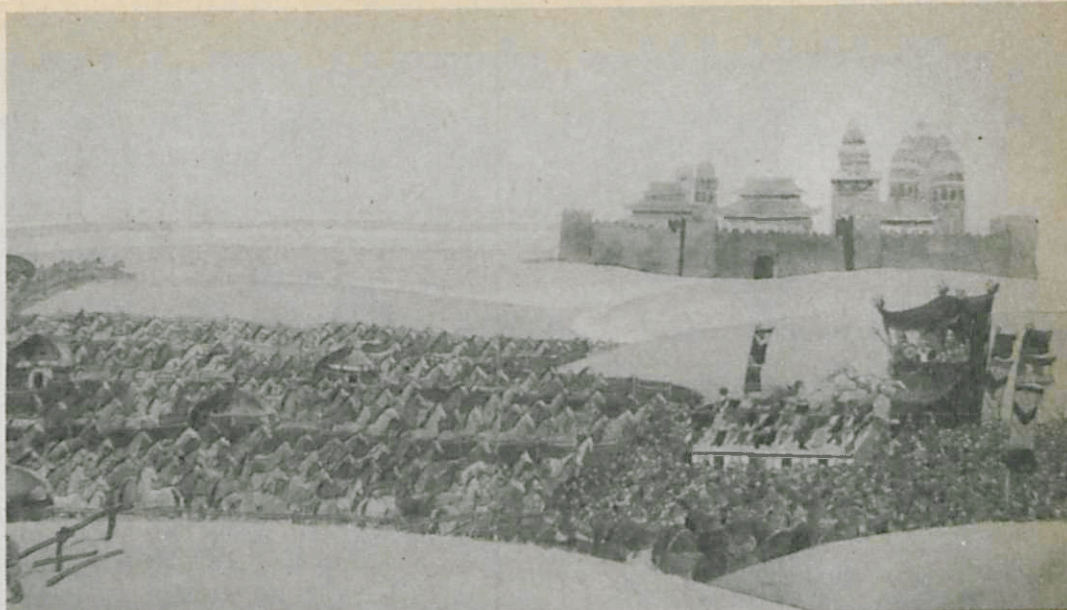
When it comes to family background, Jenny's cafe worker Mum and bus driver Dad are shown to be real and sympathetic people and their tiredness, lack of money, obligation to do shift work, all make up the daily fabric of their lives about which Jenny is growing in understanding.

Try to persuade young readers to read *Jenny and the Sheep Thieves* first as there are so many references in this new book to that adventure. Both books can be warmly recommended for the 8-10s.

Rosemary Stones
Children's Rights Workshop

ALL THE KING'S HORSES
by Michael Foreman
(Hamish Hamilton, £2.95)

Michael Foreman's picture



The princess sorting out her suitors, from *All the King's Horses*

books with a message have been a familiar feature of the established children's book world for some time and have provided young children with witty and imaginative stories as well as subtle picture parables about some of the most unacceptable aspects of modern society: greed, pollution, capitalist production, nationalism and militarism (and the cold war), competitiveness and the abuse of power. (See especially *Dinosaurs* and *all that rubbish and Moose*, both in Puffin paperback).

It is not surprising then that Foreman has now turned his undoubted talents as an illustrator and storyteller to the issue of women's liberation, with which he is in obvious sympathy. *All the King's Horses* is the tale of a princess who "wasn't the milk-white, golden-haired, pink little number the way princesses are supposed to be"; and she's bored. She sorts out all the suitors for her hand by wrestling them into submission and rides off alone into the steppes followed by hordes of horses "rushing through the nightmares of kings and the dreams of princesses". Women's autonomy and independence could not be more simply and wittily put — and there is real excitement running through this book.

A common problem in message picture books of this kind is that the symbolism used is often too sophisticated for children to understand. Where *All the King's Horses* is so successful is that it exploits the princess in her castle fairy tale convention — with which children are only too familiar — and stands it amusingly on its head.

Andrew Mann
Children's Rights Workshop

THE MAN WHOSE MOTHER WAS A PIRATE
by Margaret Mahy
pictures by Brian Froud
(Puffin, 50p)

Out now at last in paperback is a picture book that for long has been one of the very few books around to have a dynamic woman in them. First published in 1972, *The Man Whose Mother Was a Pirate* is a compellingly successful fantasy by a most prolific and often popular children's book writer, Margaret Mahy, and can be recommended for any household, if only for the amazing collage illustrations.

No heavy message here, just a joyful and poetic story of a mother who takes her desk-bound son away from the world of profit, order and servility. It makes one want to get up and go, to follow their example and go to sea.

Andrew Mann
Children's Rights Workshop

THE GENDER TRAP
A Closer Look at Sex Roles
By Carol Adams and
Rae Laurikietis
Books 1, 2 and 3
OUT NOW

A feminist series of books
for young people, their
teachers and parents
Paperback: £1.25
Hardback: £2.95

At bookshops,
libraries, or
from 3 Cbeyne Place
London SW3 4HH
01 352 0524

COMPENDIUM
240 Camden High Street
London NW1
(01) 485 8944

Large selection of
books on women and
sexual politics

Mail Order Service:
Send for free list

Sexism in Children's Books
Facts, figures & guidelines

Edited by Children's Rights Workshop



70p (inc. p.&p) from Writers and Readers Publishing
Cooperative 14 Talacre Road London NW5 3PE

★ ★ ★ ★
**SPREAD
SPARE RIB
AROUND**
★ ★ ★ ★

Have a happy holiday...



... and make sure Spare Rib's there when you get home...

Summer is a bad time for magazine sales — all magazines, not just *Spare Rib*. Place a regular order at your local newsagent before you go away and then you won't miss an issue and you'll help *Spare Rib*. Better still, take out a year's subscription.

Fill in the coupon and hand it to your local newsagent

☐ Please reserve 1 copy of *Spare Rib*, starting with issue 50, publication date August 18, 1976

Distributors: Moore Harness, 31 Corsica Street, London N5. Tel: 01-359 4126.

If your local newsagent is having trouble getting *Spare Rib*, send us their name and address and we'll send them details on how to get the magazine.

Spare Rib Subscription Rates (for 1 year): UK & Europe . . . £4.44;
Elsewhere seairmail . . . \$12.00; Elsewhere airmail . . . \$20.00

To *Spare Rib* Subscriptions, c/o Linda Phillips, 114
George Street, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 2EJ

☐ Please send me *Spare Rib* for 1 year
☐ I enclose cheque/PO for £ (see rates).
Make cheques/POs payable to *Spare Ribs Ltd*.

NAME

ADDRESS

A midwife is essential if you want to have your baby at home. (The derivation of the word 'midwife' is from the Anglo Saxon mid meaning together, and wif meaning women.) Christine Beels looks at past and present attempts to take childbirth out of the hands of domiciliary midwives.

In the beginning

"The doctors are very jealous of the midwives — extremely so. They do not want them. There are very few parts of the country where that is not the case except in the hilly places where they are glad to be saved the long drives up hill."

This was Miss Broadwood of the Cottage Benefit Nursing Association giving evidence to a Committee considering the working of the Midwives Act of 1902. This Act, providing for the registration and training of professional midwives, met with great hostility from the medical profession. That midwifery — an all-female professional body — was established at all seems a great achievement; but now, 60 years later, domiciliary (home visiting) midwifery is being phased out — quietly, with little protest, and after no consultation with its consumers. The service could be extinct within ten years. This at a time when women are increasingly anxious about hospitals interfering with the normal process of birth.

From early in our history, women have acted as healers, abortionists, nurses, herbalists and midwives to each other. Witch hunting from 1300 to 1600 had as a root cause the threat that ministering peasant women presented to the growing profession of the male bourgeois physician. The associations between the white witch and the midwife were strong, reinforced by male values relating to the innate uncleanness of women, particularly during pregnancy and birth. (The purifying of women after childbirth — "Churching" — only fell into disuse during this century.)

It was only after the Renaissance that surgeons and physicians — all male — began to interest themselves in obstetrics as a speciality. The title "man midwife" (*accoucheur*) was invented, and their lucrative trade flourished — usually attendance at a birth meant being family physician for life. The status of the "helping woman" had never been high, and as male standards made birth increasingly clinical, the midwife fell into disrepute, attending only the poorer women who could not afford a doctor. Ill repute associated the midwife with slovenliness and drunkenness.

The 1776 admittance rules of the Leeds General Infirmary specify "...

no woman big with child, no child under six years of age, no person disordered in her senses, suspected to have the small pox . . . shall be admitted as inpatients." Hospitals were reluctant to admit women with puerperal fever which was almost certain to arise wherever a woman gave birth. Puerperal fever or sepsis was infection following childbirth; it was caused by a total lack of understanding about hygiene and cleanliness. Some lying-in wards were established in hospitals during the 18th century and the British Lying-In Hospital in 1758. Others offered assistance to "poor married women in difficult labours" but puerperal fever was a killer and conditions in hospitals made them the worst possible environment for labouring women.

Puerperal fever reached almost unbelievable proportions — 200 epidemics in Europe between 1650 and 1850. In Lombardy in 1775, not one woman survived the birth of her child. So, although male midwives made great progress in their knowledge of the mechanics and management of labour, huge numbers of women and children continued to die. "For each case of puerperal fever that there has been when every woman was delivered in her own home, the lying-in hospital produced an epidemic." It was many years before its infectious nature was

understood and incidence decreased.

Structuring a female skill

Nurses, handmaidens to assist doctors, had become an acceptable part of the medical scene by the late 19th century; they were a vocational body of women supporting and serving the doctor. Midwifery was alone, miraculously it seems now, in affirming its strength as a traditionally female skill, and in improving and structuring that skill. In 1902, the Midwives Act was passed, whereby women ("a higher class of woman and improving") were to be trained and registered as domiciliary practitioners. This contrasts with the situation in America where they were completely outlawed, although a study at Johns Hopkins University in 1912 showed the midwives to be more competent than the doctors. The same applied in Canada. It is only now in America that women are beginning to raise doubts about American obstetrics. Three years ago women midwives were prosecuted in California for doing home deliveries.

Women were reluctant to use the newly qualified midwife. Those who could afford him preferred a doctor who had a woman merely as an assistant, and poorer women were happier with the untrained woman who would be more convivial and more helpful in the home. They also enjoyed a fair

Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GUEST



amount of "churchyard luck", meaning that the infants often did not survive, something often wished for by the very poor and overburdened.

Frequently midwives had to pay a doctor from their own meagre fee before he would attend a difficult delivery. And unless they were practising in an urban area, midwives had to accept additional work as District Nurses to support themselves.

It was a waste of money for local authorities to train midwives while doctors persisted in their disapproval, so it was not until 1936 that the Midwives Act set up a national service of salaried midwives employed by local authorities. Unlike their hospital colleagues, they had a fair degree of autonomy and retain this today. The mortality rate in the early years of this century dropped dramatically (from 118 per million deaths from sepsis in 1902 to 91 per million in 1905) and much of the credit for this must go to midwives and to health visitors.

Drive to hospitalisation

An increase in the number of hospital births took place after a large survey on all births during one week in 1968. This diagnosed the "high risk" categories who should always be confined in a fully equipped hospital. (Briefly, these risks were heart disease or other serious medical condition, first baby, breech baby, twins, fifth or subsequent child, or being over 35). Then in 1970, a Committee (Chairperson, Sir John Peel) reported on "Domiciliary Midwifery and Maternity Bed Needs". This report is current Department of Health policy. It suggested that there be a goal of 100% hospital confinement, but that wishes for a homebirth should be respected where there were no contra-indications. It has been suggested that this committee, which saw a reduction in infant death as a direct consequence of hospitalisation, actually based their recommendations on a statistical fallacy (see *Effectiveness and Efficiency: Random Reflections on Health Services* by Professor A.L. Cochrane).

We can see that many factors have

produced our current fairly low death rate: better knowledge and training for midwives and doctors, improved hospital techniques, and an improvement in women's domestic living situation, but most significant of all is the present high standard of care before birth. Absence of, or inadequate ante-natal care increases the death rate for newborn babies by 500%. It is this aspect of clinical care rather than *where* the child is born that has made childbirth so much safer.

Risky improvements

During the 1950s and 1960s a well equipped hospital seemed the safest place to be — but is this still the case? Hospitals have, as we know, designed procedures to "improve" upon nature's normal birth. They make the process a more predictable one for the doctor but also increase risks for 97% of the women whose births could otherwise have been normal. Research by Professor Ashford of Exeter University has shown a far higher level of job satisfaction among nursing staff in hospitals where a high level of obstetric interference is practised. The nurses monitoring foetal heart machines constantly felt themselves useful and busy, whereas presumably those sitting by normal women in labour felt bored and under-used. Hospitals also concentrate their resources on small, premature infants at the expense again of those who are "normal", i.e. dull and routine. Prof. Ashford says, "Any further increase in the numbers of hospital confinements may be counterproductive under existing conditions. There is no objective evidence that more than a small proportion of the confinements currently taking place in institutions enjoy services substantially better than could be provided in the mother's own home by an effective domiciliary service. Indeed, unless the hospital is adequately staffed and equipped a false sense of security may be engendered."

It has also been suggested that severe post partum depression is found only in women who give birth in hospital — incidence is probably also higher in

women whose labour has been pharmacological, i.e. induced by a hormone drip, rather than purely physiological. Cross-infection too makes hospital a slightly less safe place to be. The criterion of hospital delivery is not in itself an index of the quality of care that's likely to be received. America, where all births are high-powered hospital ones, is 14th down the list of the international low maternal mortality league tables, and Holland with 50% home births is at the top. (In Holland too, midwives have a more intensive obstetric training and can carry out more complicated procedures.)

Subordinate to doctors

If it isn't absolutely certain that hospital is the safest place to be, why is there such determination to phase out home deliveries? Administrative convenience is the major factor, and as our local authorities and area health authorities become larger, more depersonalising and understaffed due to the cuts, there is less consideration for individuals' freedom of choice.

The specialised training of midwives is being eroded. Soon all midwives will have to train first as nurses. Giving birth is not an illness but a normal non-clinical event. It cannot be to our advantage to have an attendant whose primary training has been with the sick rather than with the well, and who has also been trained to function as a subordinate to a doctor rather than as a professional in her own right.

Unfortunately, as community midwives are scattered and work in comparative isolation — many of them working only at nights or for a few hours a week — their opportunities to organise and protest about their demise are very limited. One of the least attractive arguments put forward for permitting men to become midwives is that they would raise the status and bargaining power of the profession.

Area health authorities can run down the midwifery service in their area in as short a time as two years — simply by making it difficult to find so that there is "no demand". The pattern over the country is erratic. Wales and Scotland have almost 100% hospital births, so do Eastbourne, Cheshire, parts of Somerset, Gloucestershire and Doncaster. In East Anglia, Coventry, Staffordshire, Leicester, Leeds, Yorkshire, Co. Durham, Northamptonshire, all the London areas it's possible to have even a first baby at home without too many hassles. It's not possible in Kent, Bristol and parts of Devon and Cornwall. You can see how arbitrary the whole system is — how much it has to do with administrative areas and how little to do with medical conditions.

Shopping around

There are now very few parts of the country where women can't give birth in hospital. But one notable exception occurred during the 1972 hospital strike in Ashton-under-Lyme. A case study was carried out on 65 women booked



for hospital confinement and then obliged to stay at home. It showed that before, 25 did not want to stay at home and 40 were pleased by the change of plan. Afterwards, 52 were so happy that they intended to have any further births at home. That was 80%. Many of us would consider it an additional bonus that 22% of husbands thought they would be present at the hospital birth, but at home, 48% were there. The authors concluded that domiciliary services should not be further run down.

An AIMS³ survey of 2,000 women found that an overwhelming 80% who had experienced both home and hospital confinements much preferred the domestic one, and a smaller study recently carried out by Newcastle's Community Health Council showed a 25% demand there.

Undoubtedly most women do much prefer to go to hospital for the birth of their first child. And there are now more alternatives in hospital care. There is full hospital care with ante natal care and then an eight or ten day stay afterwards. There is ante natal care from a GP and delivery in hospital, and increasingly it's possible to be discharged after 48 hours to the care of the local midwife. As domiciliary midwives attend fewer births, they are spending more of their time caring for women who return home after 48 hours. It's ironic that the continuity of care — one reason why many women want a home birth — often suffers because midwives cannot accurately plan their working day when coping with large numbers of "48 hours".

Another interesting scheme is "domino delivery", pioneered in Kent where it is virtually impossible to have a home birth. A woman is totally under the care of a midwife, remaining at home with her in the early stages of labour, and travelling with her to the hospital when they choose. The midwife delivers the baby herself within the hospital delivery room, mother and baby rest for up to six hours and then go straight home. The Society to Support Home Confinements¹ which has over 200 representatives throughout the country now, feel the "domino" scheme is a bad one — women should not be moved at the height of labour. They are also unhappy about the increasing tendency to transfer women with difficulties during labour into hospital, rather than bringing the specialist equipment or personnel to her.

Alternatively, there is care from the GP and then delivery and post natal care by her/him in a GP unit attached to a hospital. GP units carry higher mortality figures than other types of care, and are probably going to be phased out.

The Central Midwives Board is in favour of health service reorganisation and of midwives working within the hospital system, also of community midwives who work in the hospital and in the neighbourhood. This last is a good idea of course, as most hospitals and their staff are so isolated from the rest

of their local community.

Their own bedrooms

If none of those appeal to you and you want to have your child at home, what do you do if your doctor isn't interested or just says "No"? (She/he may not be on the obstetric register her/himself, but can transfer you for the duration of pregnancy to an obstetric general practitioner.) Most common reasons for refusing a home birth are, "It's your first baby," or "You're over 25," or "You had forceps delivery last time." None of these are by themselves a valid reason. The Society to Support Home Confinements issues a fact sheet on what to do next . . . you write to your doctor, the Medical Officer of Health and the local midwife, telling them that you have been advised against this course of action but that you take personal responsibility for your decision. A letter from the person or persons you live with who will be caring for you after the birth is helpful.

Although there is still a legal right to give birth at home and a legal right to be attended, nobody actually bears the burden of seeing that a woman is attended. A GP, if notified that a birth is imminent, need only notify the nearest hospital and ascertain that a bed will be ready. If a woman gives birth without notifying a doctor she breaks the law, and if a midwife attends her without notifying a doctor, she may be guilty of malpractice.

So today, if you are extremely persistent and determined you can have a home birth. But in the future — over the next five years or so — it will become harder and harder.

Criticism of this demand for a woman's right to choose has come (surprisingly to me) from the women's movement and from *Spare Rib* (No.36). It is felt that a "back to nature" approach (not my phrase) by some will limit the choice of others. But it doesn't follow that the minority who want to give birth at home are in any way handicapping the chances of change and improvement in the hospital service. In fact the reverse could be

true — more and more women refusing to use hospitals and over-burdening a run-down midwifery service might just make hospital administrators look to see what's wrong with their hospitals.

As to the context of giving birth at home, yes, it does rather presuppose a supportive and cosily domestic atmosphere, with a loving father or husband and perhaps even a granny on hand. But all that a newly delivered woman actually needs is loving friends around — they don't have to be male and they don't have to be blood relatives. Home can mean whatever a woman wants it to mean. It's true that some women who would like to be delivered at home don't have adequate conditions — but there are other ways of campaigning for better, more equal living conditions than running down the midwife service.

For generations now, pregnant women have been deceived and awed by the power of mostly male obstetric science. If we don't want a pharmacological birth in a sterile, hostile, unloving atmosphere, need we have it? If we don't want to be presented with a sleepy, drugged infant for ten minutes a day and told what to do with it, need we be? The work methods of a packaging factory have been brought to the labour ward, and for all women who would feel easier, happier and safer in their own bedrooms, the choice should be theirs.□

There is no medical body which supports home births but the following groups are anxious that this freedom should be maintained:

- 1 The Society to Support Home Confinements (Margaret Whyte, 17 Laburnum Avenue, Durham City. Tel: 61325. Margaret Wright, tel: Newcastle 668965). The Society aims to provide practical help for women wanting home births.
- 2 The National Childbirth Trust (9 Queensborough Terrace, London W2).
- 3 Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (Anne Taylor, West Hill Cottage, Exmouth Place, Hastings, Sussex).

Christine is writing a book on childbirth. Contact her with your experiences at 19 Broomfield Crescent, Leeds 9.





One of the posters from the Tachai production brigade called "Welders". "Gone are the delicate beauties of the old posters; here women workers are shown proud of being able to 'hold up half the sky' in shipbuilding." From the magazine, *China Reconstructs*.

Chinese Women

Last month *Suki Colegrave* described some of the ways in which she believes Chinese women are still oppressed and exploited today. This issue she explains their present situation in the context of policies towards women which were formulated in the early days of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In 1922 Hsiang Chin-yu was given the job by the CCP of leading the women's movement because she believed that women should be mobilised to contribute to the current political and social campaigns rather than agitate on "women's issues". She encouraged female participation within the labour movement of the 1920s, arguing that the oppression of women would be resolved with the establishment of socialism in China.

In the rural areas the women's movement effectively began in P'eng P'ai's Hailufeng Soviet in the early 1920s. The women's associations were set up and were soon faced by the central problem which was to haunt the following decades, of CCP policy towards women — still essentially unresolved. The dilemma centred on how to implement policies designed to improve the position of poor and middle peasant women without antagonising their husbands and fathers who the CCP relied on as the backbone of their army. This was handled by encouraging rural women to copy urban women and give all their energy to supporting the production movement and the class struggle rather than concentrating on "women's issues".

This approach was directly in line with Mao's own feelings. He argued in the 1920s that the quickest and most efficient way of alleviating the suffering of Chinese women was by overthrowing the "political authority of the landlords" which, he said, was the "backbone of all other systems of authority."

Ting Ling: Feminist 'Martyr'

The suppression by the CCP of spontaneous or autonomous feminist demands sprang from this policy decision. Ting Ling is China's most famous feminist "martyr" and she is still *persona non grata*, unlike most of those who have been purged at some time since 1949. Ting Ling has not appeared in public since the 100 Flowers Campaign of 1957, and her close friends in China can only receive one letter from her a year.

Her crime was to criticise the CCP for not adequately keeping their promises to women. Earlier, in 1942, she was also severely rebuked for describing the difficulties experienced by women in the liberated areas. "If women did not marry," she wrote, "they were ridiculed; if they did and had children, they were chastised for holding political posts rather than being at home with their families; if they remained at home for a number of years, they were slandered as backward. Whereas in the old society they were pitied, in the new one they are condemned for a predicament not of their own making."

In 1950 the CCP published the Marriage Law. It was a watered down version of the laws which had been enforced in the soviets and liberated areas before 1949. Freedom of marriage and divorce was stipulated but the emphasis was more on reconciliation than it had been in the previous laws. However, despite its relatively mild formulations, the Law created acute problems for the CCP. It threatened to divide its principal supporters: the poor and lower middle peasant families who constituted the vast majority of China's population. There were gruesome stories of husbands torturing their wives to death or forcing them to commit suicide rather than grant a divorce. The traditional tensions between wives and mothers-

in-law erupted as it was realised that, not only could a daughter-in-law leave her husband, but she could also theoretically take with her a portion of land. Some young wives also were frightened by the Law. They feared, justifiably, that if they were divorced their chances of re-marriage were slim. They would be considered defiled and unfit for anything but a life of service and abuse.

Two central reasons account for this situation: traditional male prejudice and genuine economic fears. To overthrow prejudice, an intensive attack on the old culture was necessary. Economic fears could only be resolved by a change in the social and economic organisation of production; unpaid female labour must cease to play a vital role within the family, and the family farm, with its private ownership of land, must cease to be the primary economic unit of society. But the CCP did not believe that China was ready for either of these changes in the early 1950s so a rapid back pedalling in relation to the Marriage Law characterised the 1953–55 period. Divorce was discouraged and women were told to consider their role as housewives to be their major contribution to socialism instead of demanding work outside the home.

In 1955 this emphasis changed with the setting up of Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives. Engels was widely quoted for saying that "The first requisite for the emancipation of women is that all women participate again in social labour; to achieve this, individual families are required to be no longer the units of the social economy." The commune movement in the late 1950s intensified the campaign to get women out of the home and into the traditionally "male" jobs, so as to free men for large-scale construction works, water conservancy projects, etc. Many men responded to these changes by quoting the traditional sayings: "If a woman goes to the fields it won't rain, if she goes to sea the boat will turn over." The CCP attacked these prejudices with intensive propaganda. They also set up communal facilities such as dining halls, nurseries and welfare services to ease the new demands being made on women.

The results were sometimes chaotic. Opposition to the dining halls and to women doing "male" jobs was compounded by inadequate health provisions for nursing mothers, pregnant and menstruating women. Contraceptive supplies were poor and irregular because of a general lack of organisation and also because of the ongoing male demand for sons. As a result many women were under severe strain from the dual demands of domestic and agricultural work. Moreover, they were not compensated for the added load by receiving equal pay with men.

Instead of trying to sort out the prejudice from the economic and administrative problems, the CCP acquiesced in the widespread abolition of many, if not all, of the communal services and millions of women returned to being housewives, although housework was *not* reinstated as a woman's most important contribution to socialism. Those women who continued to work outside the home did so with little support from men or institutions. This situation persisted throughout the extremely poor economic years of the early 1960s.

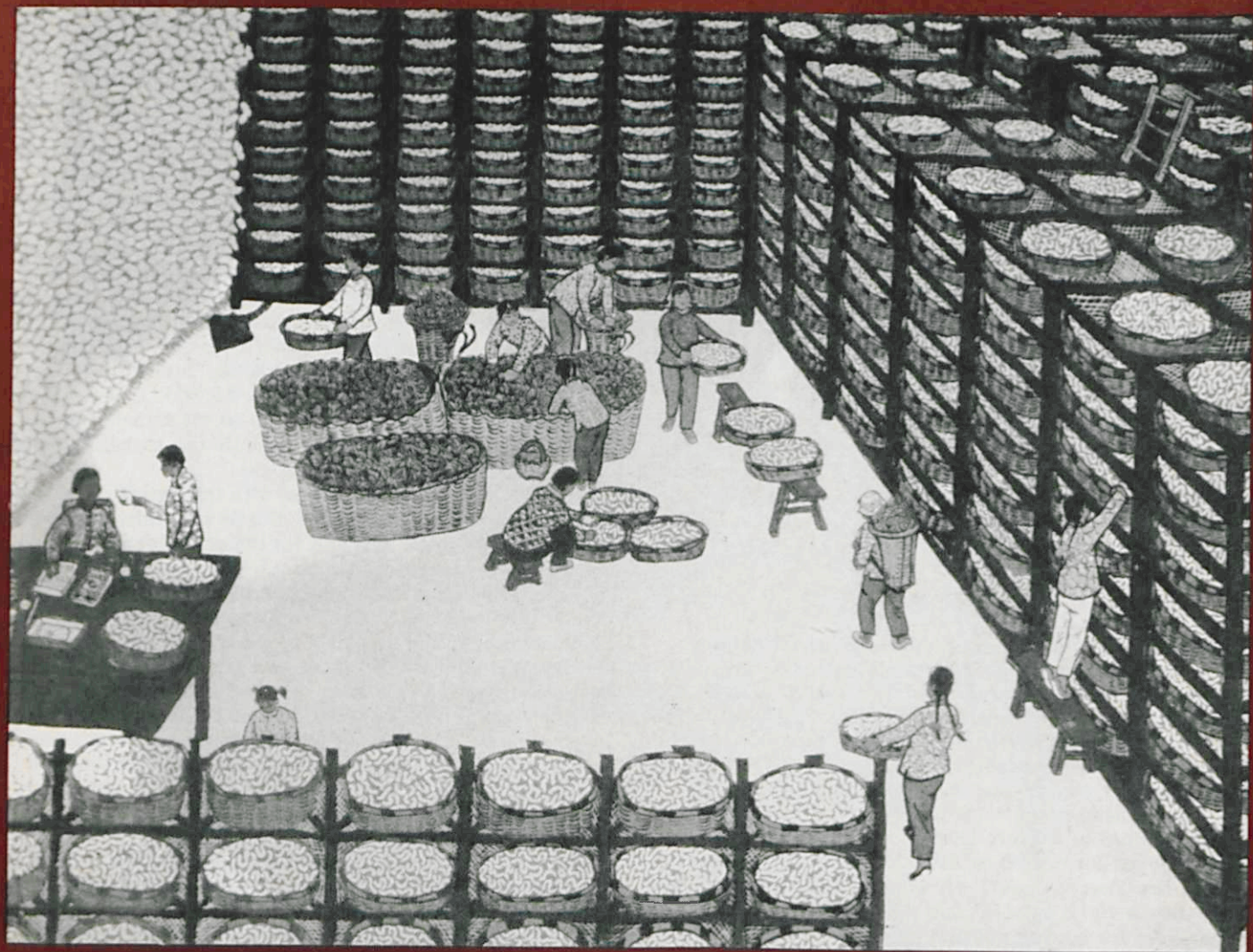
Massive Campaign for Health Education

The Cultural Revolution indirectly brought some advantages to women. Mao's famous critique of the health system in 1965 for serving the urban elites resulted in a massive campaign to spread medical knowledge and expertise to the countryside. Many women, for the first time, acquired regular contraceptives, and essential knowledge about hygiene. With a greater control over their own bodies it was easier for them to respond to the new call for women to take part in production outside the home.

However, the Cultural Revolution left many of the abuses and prejudices against women intact. Some of these were attacked during the early 1970s as part of the campaign to criticise Confucius and Lin Piao. The central targets were those prejudices and customs which hindered women from playing a full role in production outside the home, such as the male demand for plenty of sons and the traditional prejudice against women working in the fields.

No Direct Assaults Against Male Prejudice

But this campaign like its predecessors, was not principally



Painting by Wu Sheng-chin, *Raising Silkworms*, from the collection *Peasant Paintings from Hubsien County*

designed to attack the general inequalities and difficulties suffered by women. It was a much wider exercise to root out those "capitalist roaders" who had survived the Cultural Revolution, and the "ultra-leftists" who had been created by these years of struggle and debate. The CCP has never believed in the need for a direct assault against all aspects of male prejudice.

The Women's Federation, a mass organisation set up to organise women, clearly reflects this belief. Its tasks are to mobilise women to study Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, to encourage the participation of women in production (defined as work *outside* the home), to promote internationalism, to train women for political jobs within the Federation and other mass organisations, and to supervise family planning. It is not the task of the Federation to formulate its own policy or to question the CCP policy which argues that propelling women into production is more important than considerations about the kind of work they will do when they get there, how much they will be paid and the conditions in which they will work. Anomalies such as the "housewives' factories" which we examined last month, and other inequalities suffered by Chinese women spring from this set of priorities.

Child Care & Education: Different Values

The direct repression of feminist issues in China co-exists with a general repression of personal and psychological questions. Both men and women are oppressed by a masculine ideology which exalts the "objective", the rational and the measurable, and despises the "subjective", the irrational and the emotions. A conspicuous example of this is child care. Many children are placed in day care centres and boarding kindergartens for six days a week. The psychological effects of this on parents and children are rarely questioned. I talked to one woman whose children were both in boarding kindergartens. She described how bad tempered they were when she took them home one

day a week. I suggested that their crossness might be due to their difficulty in adjusting to the change of environments. "Oh no," she said, "they are just bad tempered children, they were born that way."

It is obviously very difficult to assess the psychological health of Chinese children. It is possible they are considerably less disturbed than many western children. Everywhere we went we saw adventurous and gentle children. The poise and confidence with which they danced and sang for us when we visited their schools was quite remarkable compared to many British primary schools. However, we also saw a few factory and commune creches where the joy and liveliness was less noticeable. Some of these could be described as "dumping grounds". In one creche the babies were sitting in little chairs with pots beneath them. It was toilet training time, we were told. But the small room with its concrete floor, damp walls, and one large cot offered little else in the way of more stimulating activities. The same damp and depressing atmosphere characterised the two dark rooms opposite which contained groups of two- to three-year-olds. However, the quality of care is obviously much more important than the surroundings and certainly the women looking after the children appeared to be gentle, relaxed and patient. Nowhere did I see the harassed and exhausted women who are so frequently a feature of British nursery schools.

Chinese children also benefit from a very tightly integrated society permeated by a strict ideological uniformity. This helps to prevent the tensions and contradictions western children experience as they move between the different value systems of home and school. Furthermore the Chinese ideology stresses mutual care and responsibility. This is not only practised among individuals but also between institutions: the school is not separate from the factory, nor is the street committee isolated from the family. Each institution is an integral part of the whole.

But mutual care and responsibility can easily turn into mutual surveillance and lack of privacy and there are indications that although Chinese children may not feel this aspect of the system, some adults find Chinese institutions and the lack of concern for personal problems extremely painful. The large majority of patients in Chinese mental hospitals are suffering from what are described as "love problems and paranoia". These people have clearly failed to subordinate their personal problems, psychological concerns or individuality to the political and economic demands of the "mass line". Their therapy is a microcosmic reflection of Chinese culture; they are treated by the same methods which caused or exacerbated their illness in the beginning, and are taught how to deal with their problems rather than how to understand them. They undergo interminable moral and political talks designed to raise their consciousness about the anti-social nature of their behaviour.

Public Before Private

Marital relations also reflect this lack of concern for the personal and individual psychology. Divorce in China, though legally available, is virtually non-existent. Most people we asked about it said they knew divorce was possible but they hadn't ever heard of anyone who had been divorced. Powerful social pressure is exerted on the unhappy couple to bring about a reconciliation. The numerous divorces during the early 1950s are attributed to the arranged marriages of the "old society". "Now things are different," they said, "why would anyone want to get divorced when they had the freedom to choose whom they married?"

In some ways Chinese society generates fewer social and economic problems which can exacerbate tensions in relationships than capitalist societies. Couples not only have less private time but also are subject to constant propaganda, teaching them to subordinate the private to the public. Many problems which were, traditionally, the responsibility of the family are now group decisions. Even personal decisions like when to have a child are now discussed openly and decided by the whole village. In these ways marriage is not only a personal affair, it is also an important part of the whole social order which supports it in every way, not least through the stringent puritan ethic. Pre-marital and extra-marital sex are strongly condemned and secret relations are complicated by the absence of privacy and a highly structured time-table.

Sex is to be enjoyed at the right time, in the right place and only when it does not interfere with more important duties. Recently, the Chinese have underlined this point by issuing a small book on masturbation. It outlines the ills that are associated with this irresponsible pastime. Sounding like a Victorian handbook, it maintains that masturbation can cause premature ejaculation and impotence in men, and physical damage such as vaginal bleeding in women. The book provides an interesting insight into the mechanism of sexual oppression. But its publication indicates that, despite rigorous repression, sexual preoccupations still live.

The denial of the individual in China was strongly criticised by Chou En-lai, a few years ago. He argued that the slogan "all public, no self" was unrealistic and should be replaced with "first public, second self". Possibly his attitude is a pointer to the future, but at the moment individual self-expression is discouraged. Nothing reflects this more clearly than education. The schools we saw, including Peking University, were all highly structured and disciplined institutions with the emphasis heavily on group activities. Even art classes do not provide a chance for self expression. In one school we were told that they took the form of the students copying a picture the teacher has painted or drawn. I have never seen such detailed and carefully delineated children's paintings. Their content reflects the emphasis on production and political themes and it was very difficult to tell whether a group of paintings had all been done by one child or were the work of several.

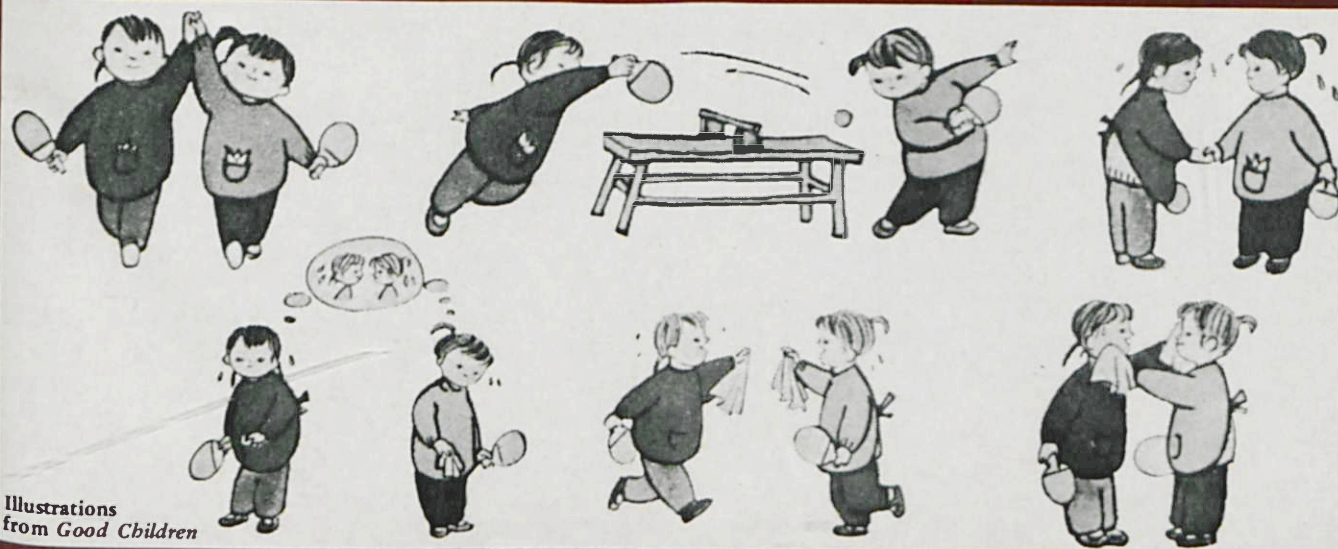
But the advantages of "all public, no self" in education are also significant, particularly in cultures like our own which easily confuse self development with competition. Every Chinese child is encouraged to feel responsible for her classmates; if someone fails a test it is the task of the whole class as well as the teacher to make sure she passes next time. Exams, like sports, are more a test of proficiency and expertise than a means of improving one's own status at the expense of one's friends.

Women Are Now Human Beings

In this article I have stressed the shortcomings in China's definitions and implementations of women's liberation. The successes are extremely important but better documented. Chinese women have been freed from two thousand years of semi-slavery. For the first time since the beginning of Imperial China, they are defined and treated as human beings and enjoy the dignity that that can imply. Children also are immeasurably better off. Some of the creches may compare badly with my ideals for child care and the neglect of psychological considerations may be harmful, but in the old society children frequently starved or were sold into virtual slavery. Individual self expression may be lacking in China, but in traditional society the only means of self expression for most women was suicide.

Contemporary China not only compares favourably with her own past but also, in many ways, with the west. Group living may involve oppression, boredom and sameness but it is also true that in China there are no homeless, no orphans, no lonely people in bedsitting rooms and only very few old people who are not cared for by their families.

But it is patronising and unnecessary to make excuses for the serious gaps and failures in Chinese policy towards women, as one Chinese at least was well aware. In 1972 a group of foreign visitors asked Chou En-lai to comment on these failures: "Well," he said, "Chinese men [and here he switched to English] are male chauvinist pigs." □



Illustrations
from Good Children

ANGRY ABOUT THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE RICH COUNTRIES AND THE POOR? YOU'LL FIND

THE PEOPLE, THE IDEAS AND THE ACTION

IN THE FIGHT FOR A BETTER WORLD WITH THE

NEW Internationalist

THE ONLY POPULAR CAMPAIGNING MAGAZINE ON WORLD DEVELOPMENT



The New Internationalist is a pioneering non-profit making venture with 15 thousand regular subscribers. It explains the connections and the conflicts between developed and developing countries: why the coffee in your cup is of crucial importance to Tanzanian farmers; why the cotton workers of Colne and Calcutta are at loggerheads. And it's a magazine you'll enjoy reading. The New Internationalist is no dry economics journal nor dreary political diatribe.

We promise not to bore you – just to inform you rapidly, shock you sometimes, infuriate you occasionally and entertain as well.

FEBRUARY '76 – Southern Africa Special. Who are the ANC? What is Namibia? A New Internationalist guide to the convulsions of a continent.

MARCH '76 – Multinational companies – benevolent giants or global menace? The power they wield. The accounting tricks explained.

APRIL '76 – The World in Your Shopping Basket. Tea, bananas, coffee who sells what and who makes the money.

Collect your monthly copies of the New Internationalist and you'll know what's going on – and why.

"COULD WELL SET A NEW PATTERN IN AROUSING PUBLIC INTEREST" *The Guardian*



FREE MAGAZINES AND WALLCHART

* Free if you write now – 'Population and People' – a striking full colour 12" x 48" wallchart with 38 photographs, highlighting the real issues in the population debate.

TRIAL OFFER

KEEP THE FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Special binder available

- 1 Attractive popular presentation of all the crucial links between rich and poor nations. *
- 2 Hard hitting reports on the governments, the companies and the people that matter. *
- 3 Concise layman's guides to important subjects – oil, population, trade, shipping, food, multi-nationals, tourism, gold. *
- 4 Builds up into a handy bookshelf reference of the key facts and arguments. *

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

white South Africans earn on average fourteen times as much as blacks.

the population of India is greater than that of the whole of North, Central and South America put together?

a major drug company has been overcharging Latin American countries by 6,000%?

"A WELCOME CHANGE FROM THE EMPHASIS ON STARVATION AND PRIMITIVE LIVING" *Times Ed. Supp*

3 MONTHS FREE TRIAL

But you don't have to take our word for it. The subscription we're offering is £4.75. However, if you fill in the coupon below you will receive your first three months copies and a full colour wallchart completely free. Then if not completely satisfied all you need do is write to us before three months from the date below have elapsed and we will cancel your subscription. You can keep everything you have received and it won't have cost you a penny.

Send for your free copies today – you don't even need a stamp – to New Internationalist, FREEPOST, Benson, OXFORD OX9 6BR.

Internationalist FREEPOST, Benson, OXFORD OX9 6BR

Please send me, without obligation, my free copies of the next 3 issues of the New Internationalist plus the 'Population and People' wallchart.

If I do not wish to continue after the three months trial period I will write and let you know within 3 months of the date below and will not owe you a penny.

If I do wish to continue receiving the magazine regularly, I need do nothing. You will send the Bankers Order to my bank and continue to send me the New Internationalist each month.

Name and address of your bank in BLOCK LETTERS please

To

Please pay to Nat West Bank, East Greenwich (60-07-16), the sum of £4.75 on receipt and annually thereafter until cancelled, for the account of the New Internationalist (A/C No 43615074).

Your name and address in BLOCK LETTERS please.

SR2

Signature Date
Devopress Ltd. Reg'in London No 1085127, Reg Office 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ.

FREE TRIAL OFFER

NO STAMP NEEDED
SEND NO MONEY

Page	Title	Author	Rights
1	Shirley MacLaine		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Shirley MacLaine. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
4	baby pram	Whittman, Jenny	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for baby pram. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
5	Letters		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for this item. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
6	A Hard Day's Play	Truscott, Kate; Foster, Beryl	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for A Hard Day's Play. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
6	Playground	Phillips, Angela	Usage Terms: © Angela Phillips. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
7	A Hard Day's Play	Truscott, Kate; Foster, Beryl	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for A Hard Day's Play. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
7	children playing dress up		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for children playing dress up. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
8	A Hard Day's Play	Truscott, Kate; Foster, Beryl	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for A Hard Day's Play. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
8	Child playing		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Child playing. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
9	Shirley MacLaine	Stephens, Eleanor	Usage Terms: © Stephens, Eleanor. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
9	Women queueing for the show	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
			Usage Terms: © Stephens, Eleanor. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial

10	Shirley MacLaine	Stephens, Eleanor	research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
10	Shirley MacLaine	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
11	Shirley MacLaine	Stephens, Eleanor	Usage Terms: © Stephens, Eleanor. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
11	Shirley MacLaine	Mullen, Michael Ann	Usage Terms: © Michael Ann Mullen
12	Acts of Violence	Fairbairns, Zoe	Usage Terms: © Zoe Fairbairns
12	Illustration	Yamniak, Sabine	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Illustration. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
13	Acts of Violence	Fairbairns, Zoe	Usage Terms: © Zoe Fairbairns
13	Illustration	Yamniak, Sabine	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Illustration. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
14	Acts of Violence	Fairbairns, Zoe	Usage Terms: © Zoe Fairbairns
14	Illustration	Yamniak, Sabine	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Illustration. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
16	Two letters to a man	Lewis, Shirley	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Two letters to a man. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
17	Racism: What about Asian women?		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Racism: What about Asian women?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
17	Mass meeting against racism in Southall	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
18	Racism: What about Asian women?		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Racism: What about Asian women?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
18	Australia: a crime to be raped	Green, Victoria	Usage Terms: © Victoria Green

18	Britain: rape bill lost?	Green, Victoria	Usage Terms: © Victoria Green
19	Britain: rape bill lost?	Green, Victoria	Usage Terms: © Victoria Green
19	Brazilian poster		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Brazilian poster. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
19	USA: some revolution?		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for USA: some revolution?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
19	Brazil: Women censored	Sharpe, Sue	Usage Terms: © Sue Sharpe
19	7,000 people demonstrated in New York on June 11 in protest against the proposed closing down of 49 childcare centres	Lambert, Susan	Usage Terms: © Susan Lambert
20	Trico strike	Davies, Chris	Usage Terms: © Chris Davies (enquiries@arenapal.com). This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
20	News	Nicholls, Jill; O'Malley, Jan	Usage Terms: © Jill Nicholls Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Licence; Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate all the copyright holders for News. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	Equal pay: 'an allowable addition'	Mallaber, Judy	Usage Terms: © Judy Mallaber
21	Au Pairs: Servants or Guests?	Brackx, Anny	Usage Terms: © Anny Brackx. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
21	Around the Tribunals ...		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Around the Tribunals Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
21	picket line at Stability capacitors in Basildon	Sturrock, John	Usage Terms: © John Sturrock. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
22	Hot Peaches	Dobbins, Barry	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Hot Peaches. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
			Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate

23	Women's liberation is gonne get your mama and your sister and your girlfriend		the copyright holder for Women's liberation is gonne get your mama and your sister and your girlfriend. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
23	Redstockings	Sebestyen, Amanda	Usage Terms: © Amanda Sebestyen
24	Women Against the Dust		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Women Against the Dust. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
24	"Girls In Need" Whose Need?	Taylor, Ruth	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for "Girls In Need" Whose Need?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
25	Can we save child benefits?	Lister, Ruth	Usage Terms: © Ruth Lister
25	Janet Cox	Phillips, Angela	Usage Terms: © Angela Phillips. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
25	OK. Who's for some pocketmoney?	Preston	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for OK. Who's for some pocketmoney?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
25	Battered and stabbed		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Battered and stabbed. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
26	Sitting in for jobs	Bassett, Val	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sitting in for jobs. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
26	Sitting in for jobs	Muir, Ingrid	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sitting in for jobs. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
27	Sitting in for jobs		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Sitting in for jobs. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
27	Inside Rachel McMillan College London		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Inside Rachel McMillan College London. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
28	Who Profits From Private Abortion?	Root, Jane	Usage Terms: © Jane Root

28	Secret Clinic	Hutt, Jane	Usage Terms: © Jane Hutt AM
31	The Attraction of Opposites?	Tickner, Lisa	Usage Terms: © Lisa Tickner
31	William Rufus		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for William Rufus. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
31	Deauville fashions. 1924		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Deauville fashions. 1924. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
32	The Attraction of Opposites?		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for The Attraction of Opposites?. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
33	The Attraction of Opposites?	Tickner, Lisa	Usage Terms: © Lisa Tickner
34	Only One Life	Ryan, Jo	Usage Terms: © Joanna Ryan
35	Only One Life	Ryan, Jo	Usage Terms: © Joanna Ryan
35	Working with a pillow in a shelf help therapy group	Ryan, Jo	Usage Terms: © Joanna Ryan
36	Only One Life	Ryan, Jo	Usage Terms: © Joanna Ryan
36	Working with a pillow in a shelf help therapy group	Ryan, Jo	Usage Terms: © Joanna Ryan
37	Feministo	Goodall, Phil	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Feministo. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
37	Artwork: A Woman's Work is Never Done by Penny Booth	Booth, Penny	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Artwork: A Woman's Work is Never Done by Penny Booth. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
37	Cooperativa Beato Angelico	Sebestyen, Amanda	Usage Terms: © Amanda Sebestyen
38	Cooperativa Beato Angelico	Sebestyen, Amanda	Usage Terms: © Amanda Sebestyen
38	Aurora by Artermia Gentileschi		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Aurora by Artermia Gentileschi. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
38	Marti Caine	Wandor, Michelene	Usage Terms: © Michelene Wandor
38	Evesong	Roberts, Michele	Usage Terms: © Michele Roberts. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial

			purpose.
39	Mirabelle's Secret by Griselda Gifford	Stones, Rosemary	Usage Terms: © Rosemary Stones. This item can be used for private study, non-commercial research and educational purposes only. You may not use this work for any commercial purpose.
39	book illustration: The princess sorting out her suitors, from All the King's Horses	Foreman, Michael	Usage Terms: © Michael Foreman
39	All The King's Horses	Mann, Andrew	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for All The King's Horses. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
39	The Man Whose Mother Was A Pirate	Mann, Andrew	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for The Man Whose Mother Was A Pirate. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
41	In the beginning	Beels, Christine	Usage Terms: © Christine Beels
41	Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth	Guest, John	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
42	In the beginning	Beels, Christine	Usage Terms: © Christine Beels
42	Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth	Guest, John	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
43	In the beginning	Beels, Christine	Usage Terms: © Christine Beels
43	Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth	Guest, John	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Christine Beels assisting at her friend Anne's home birth. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
44	Chinese Women	Colegrave, Suki	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Chinese Women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
44	poster from the Tachai production brigade		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for poster from the Tachai production brigade. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
45	Chinese Women	Colegrave, Suki	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Chinese Women.

			Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
46	Chinese Women	Colegrave, Suki	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Chinese Women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
46	Painting by Wu Sheng-chin	Sheng-chin, Wu	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Painting by Wu Sheng-chin. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
47	Chinese Women	Colegrave, Suki	Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Chinese Women. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.
47	Illustrations from Good Children		Usage Terms: We have been unable to locate the copyright holder for Illustrations from Good Children. Please contact copyright@bl.uk with any information you have regarding this item.